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ABSTRACT

This dissertation addresses the factors influencing student college choice and their relationship to marketing processes in a northeastern Minnesota tribal college. The project involved a three-stage process of college choice--predisposition, search, and choice--and the related factors within each stage. From a review of the literature, a number of key factors emerged regarding each stage of the three-step process. A survey instrument was developed and piloted using these factors. In January 2000, the survey was administered to students attending Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College (Minnesota). Forty-two percent of the on-campus student population participated in this study. Survey data were analyzed using a variety of descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings showed that students were influenced by a number of factors. In the predisposition stage, students agreed that they had always known that they would attend college and that they possessed the academic capability of attending college. In the search and choice stages, students responded consistently that the factors of campus location, academic programs, class size, cost, hospitality/friendliness, and campus size were influential in making their college selections. Though this study is specific to a tribal institution, the author believes the research will translate well to the general field of student recruitment and will provide a system for analyzing customer trends and activities to ensure success. (Contains 84 references and 7 appendices, including the research instrument.) (NB)

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Factors Influencing Student College Choice at a Northeastern Minnesota Tribal College

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Dr. Thomas D. Peacock, Advisor

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November 27, 2000

Date

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ABSTRACT

This thesis addresses the factors influencing student college choice and their relationship to marketing processes in a northeastern Minnesota tribal college. Each year millions of students choose to attend higher education institutions. Often unknown are the reasons why they choose the schools that they do. By better understanding customer behavior and assessing marketing outcomes, colleges can improve their systematic marketing practices thus creating greater efficiency and effectiveness.

This project involves a three-stage process of college choice (predisposition, search and choice) and the related factors within each stage. From a review of literature, a number of key factors emerged regarding each stage of the three-step process. A survey instrument was developed and piloted using these factors. In January 2000, the survey was administered to students attending Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College located in Cloquet, MN. Forty-two percent of the on-campus student population participated in this study. Survey data was analyzed using a variety of descriptive and inferential statistics.

A summary of the findings showed that students in the study were influenced by a number of factors. In the predisposition stage, students agreed that they had always known that they would attend college and that they possessed the academic capability of attending college. In the search and choice stages, students responded consistently that the factors of campus location, academic programs, class size, cost, hospitality/friendliness and campus size were influential in making their college selections.

It is hoped that the results of this research will lead to improvement in the area of student recruitment. In addition, this study will add to the body of existing

literature on this topic. While it is specific to a tribal institution and will assist other tribal colleges in the U.S., the research will translate well to the general field of student recruitment. It will provide a system for analyzing customer trends and activities to ensure institutional growth and success.

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Chapter One

Introduction

"My main reason for attending Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College is because my mother enjoyed her time here so much."

"I attend Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College because it is closer to home, it's a smaller environment and I believe it offers a lot for students with tutoring, support and supplies."

"It's a unique college with its Native American courses. The class sizes are small which makes one-on-one with the instructor possible."

"For Indian students, the main reason to attend is because it's a tribal college. For non-Indian students, it's because it's close to home, inexpensive and that we have a reputation for helping students and that our faculty really cares about their students."

The above statements illustrate an interesting observation: students choose the college that they ultimately attend for a number of different and often personal reasons. They are influenced by many factors and these influences are wide and varied. A clear understanding of what influences student college choice can greatly assist with the expensive and time consuming task of college marketing and recruitment activities. In addition, knowledge of why students choose the college that they do can help create effective and efficient recruitment activities. This, in turn, will attract students that will benefit and succeed at the institution.

With clear and on-going understanding of these influences, higher education institutions utilizing careful planning can target and promote the qualities that are important to building and shaping the student community. Colleges and universities can also use this information to strengthen areas that need improvement or to meet its mission, vision, goals, and objectives.

Background of the Problem

How students choose a college is a complex, multistage process organized in three stages (Braxton, 1990). It is through these stages that a student may make decisions that will affect his or her future education and career objectives. Hossler and Gallagher (1987) state that these three stages include predisposition, search, and choice.

Braxton (1990) states that the first stage, predisposition, refers to a student's decision to attend a post-secondary institution. This stage includes a student's goals and aspirations to be achieved by pursuing higher education. The search stage is characterized by a student gaining knowledge and information about the benefits and services from an institution and how closely they are matched to his or her own educational goals or needs. It is where all features of an institution are carefully considered. Finally, the last stage is where students apply to and make the choice on where to ultimately attend school.

What triggers a student's decision or predisposition to attend college? Interest can be stimulated both internally and externally. An internal cue can consist of a person feeling "ready" to attend college. A first internal signal could be one that is psychological such as boredom or anxiety. An external cue can be caused by something from the outside such as a personal suggestion from a friend or parent. Also, external cues could be from a non-personal source such as a publication or advertisement (Kotler and Fox, 1985). Once interest is piqued, students move on to the next stage.

Stage two, search, is considered information gathering. Students, like all consumers, face buying decisions through gathering of knowledge about their intended product. Students balance the perceived costs against the perceived benefits. Expenses may include the costs associated with attending college, where the institution is located, or programs the school offers to students. Benefits may include faculty quality, activities, and financial aid. Usually, students enroll in an institution if benefits outweigh costs (Sevier, 1996).

A national study conducted by Stamats Communication in 1997, a college market research company, revealed the following college choice characteristics of 3,000 college-bound students. The major characteristics (in no specific order) desired by prospective college students included:

- Quality of faculty
- Availability of specific majors
- Safety
- Quality of academic facilities
- Availability of scholarships
- Quality of residential life
- Cost after financial aid
- Friendliness

- Curriculum
- Academic reputation
- Ability to work part-time

(Sevier and Kappler, 1997)

During the search or information gathering stage, students use a variety of information sources. These items include publications, correspondence, telemarketing, and multimedia (Braxton, 1990; Sevier and Kappler, 1997; Straus and Van DeWater, 1997; Henley and Rogers, 1997). Students place a great deal of importance on information related to such factors as cost, financial aid, academics, and outcomes. In addition, personal letters and attention from college representatives (Sevier and Kappler, 1997; Braxton, 1990) influence them. From this information, students set parameters to manage their college search and to achieve their college choice.

After the search stage (stage 2), students form clearer pictures of the available choices (Kotler and Fox, 1985). Stage three, choice, then begins. Braxton (1990) states various characteristics about prospective students have been associated with the type of institution chosen. These factors are described below in more detail:

Location

Where an institution is located is a significant influence for prospective students. Closeness to home, the attractiveness of the city and the city's size are important factors.

Cost

The entire cost of attendance including tuition, living and other expenses are important factors. Students, like most consumers, want value for the money they spend. Students are debt-adverse. Many students are influenced by the ability to work part-time while attending college. Low cost and the resulting dollar savings are also important to students, as is the availability of financial aid. In Minnesota, the strong state scholarship program influences students to attend an institution in the state or to utilize the reciprocity agreements with neighboring states.

Image and Reputation

High on a student's influence list is a college's image or reputation. Students want to attend an institution that has a positive image and one with name recognition. Sevier (1996) illustrates with the following example: "When it came down to it, I just couldn't attend that other school. Even though it was in a more attractive city and they offered me more aid, the fact is that I really had not heard of it before they started sending me stuff in the mail. I decided to go to a college we knew – a college we had heard of."

Also important are the reputation of the academic and support programs and what alumni had accomplished in their work.

Characteristics

The characteristics of an institution are important on an individual level to students. These qualities can be loosely organized in groups of institutional characteristics like class size, academic programs, and campus safety. Another set of themes can include those that relate to a student on a psychological or attitudinal level. Examples of these factors might be a perceived fun environment and friendly and supportive students. Another group of themes considers the aesthetic features including campus beauty and unique architecture. Also on this list of influences are job placement and graduate success. These areas of influence have many variables that are unique or mean a great deal to students on a personal basis.

Quality

Institutions cannot underestimate the importance of quality and the critical need to recognize and promote it. Quality of instruction, faculty, facilities, and the student community are all significant factors that influence student college choice.

Interpersonal Connection

Other people play an important part in students' college choice. Most often mentioned are parents who related their experiences or desires to the students. This communication often follows the importance of institutional location and the hope to maintain close family ties.

Friends are also a strong influence. Some students choose to attend the same college and maintain friendships that have developed over the years. Both parents and friends appear to have greater significance in college choice than other individuals such as high school counselors and teachers.

Direct Marketing

Prospective students like to receive mail from post-secondary institutions (Sevier and Kappler, 1997). While it appears that colleges and universities may produce and mail a lot of materials, if a student is interested in a particular institution, he or she will look at it. College viewbooks, searchpieces, catalogs, and even external rankings are influential to prospective students. Students also like to see media promotion such as radio, television, and videos.

Among other marketing techniques, the campus visit, open house day, and phone calls from the admissions representative are important to a student's search and choice process. Increasingly, an institution's web site was noted as an important and influential source of information for students.

Family socioeconomic status is related to the perceived quality of the institution students apply to and attend. Cost associated with the institution does not appear to be related to family socioeconomic status. Student academic ability is another characteristic associated with college choice, as is the likelihood to attend an out-of-state institution.

The educational level of students' parents and parental encouragement to attend college appears to influence the type of college students select. Other characteristics influencing college choice include academic programs, tuition costs, financial aid, academic reputation or image, location, size, and social atmosphere. Students are also influenced by state scholarship policies and the availability of wide institution choice in a specific geographical area (Braxton, 1990). The characteristics students deem important in the stage two search process are closely corresponding to those characteristics that influence college choice (stage 3). The key for institutions is to learn about these influences and use them to assist and improve the college or university.

One local community college could benefit a great deal from this recruitment-oriented information. Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College is a young, developing institution in Cloquet, Minnesota. Much of its student recruitment has been by trial and error. Little factual data is known about what influences its students to enroll.

Statement of the Problem

The problem in this study is that little is known about the factors that influence students to attend Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College.

Purpose of this Study

The purpose of this study is to identify factors that influence students to attend Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College. Additionally, it was hoped that this data could assist with the development of a strategic student recruitment plan. From this information, the institution could identify qualities for promotion and advertising. It will also lend credibility for market research and planning at the college.

Research Questions

The following questions were developed as a result of a review of the major themes that emerged from the literature:

1. What influences a student to choose to attend a post-secondary institution? (Stage one-predisposition.)

2. What information influences a student to consider Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College? (Stage two-search.)

3. What are the major influences that students consider when choosing to attend Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College? (Stage three-choice.)

Research Variables and Limitations

1. It is important to note that individuals who participated in this study represented a wide variety of students. They included students from all economic and social backgrounds at Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College. The study group was ethnically diverse. Participants represented a generally equal distribution by age, gender and parental college background. Overall, a larger percentage of students age 24 and younger participated in the study. In addition, a greater percentage of participants were from hometowns located 30 miles or less from the college campus. Students in the study were also studying a wide variety of subjects.

2. This study involved the use of a survey instrument that was developed by the researcher. The survey questionnaire was pre-tested with admissions directors from several colleges and universities in the Midwest. The intent of this pre-testing was to determine if the survey questions were appropriate in order to receive the intended information.

3, This study involved a single institution. The results may or may not be comparable to other tribal institutions.

4. This research was conducted in January 2000 at the start of spring semester. A fall administration of the survey may or may not receive different results.

5. A final note concerns the currently limited availability of research on specific influences regarding college choice for tribal college students.

Assumptions

1. Determining factors that influence student college choice can assist with strategic market planning by an institution.

2. Identification of key characteristics can encourage positive promotion and areas for improvement within an institution.

3. That this study can serve as a starting point for expansion and continuation of this information gathering by Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College.

4. Data collected will mirror that discovered in the literature search.

Significance of this Project

This project is, at its heart, a study of customer behavior. In preparing a strategic marketing plan, organizations must emphasize an in-depth understanding of the market environment. This is important, not only to understand the current situation, but also to anticipate changes that have strategic implications (Aaker, 1988).

Business and industry spend a great deal of time and effort trying to understand its customers and the factors that influence their buying decisions. Colleges and universities need to do the same to increase their marketing efficiency and effectiveness. Many higher education institutions are continually trying to enroll more students, to enroll higher caliber students, or to enroll more students possessing desired characteristics. Understanding the influences behind college choice is the basis for building a solid marketing strategy. In this particular project, the areas of institutional location, cost, image, reputation, characteristics, quality, interpersonal connections, and direct marketing were identified as key influential factors.

Definition of Terms

The terms and definitions below are those that are most commonly used in this paper.

Student Recruitment – This is the process educational institutions use to attract and enroll students in their schools. It includes strategic marketing concepts such as customer, competitor, environmental, and industry analysis.

Direct Marketing – This includes techniques specifically aimed at a particular market. In this case, the market is potential students. Students receive materials through mailings and interpersonal contact via personal visits and telephone calls.

Interpersonal Communication – The process of communicating with another person through speaking, listening, and other similar skills.

Predisposition – The decision to continue or not continue education after high school (Borus & Carpenter, 1984; Braxton, 1990; Hossler, 1984; Jackson, 1996).

Search – The seeking and acquisition of college information and materials. From this search, "consideration sets" of desired characteristics are developed (Braxton, 1990; Hossler & Gallagher, 1987).

Choice – The identification and evaluation of institutions based on desired characteristics. From this information, admission and enrollment decisions are made (Braxton, 1990; Hossler & Gallagher, 1987).

Self-determination – The shift by the federal government to provide resources and support for the needs and choices of American Indians. (The Self-Determination Act of 1975.)

Summary and Conclusion

The complex decision-making process potential college students encounter can be organized in three stages. These stages include predisposition, search, and choice. Students are influenced along the way by a wide variety of people, publications and other materials, values, and institutional characteristics. Major factors influencing prospective students appear to include financial aid availability, academic quality, institutional image and reputation, program offerings, campus facilities, and faculty quality. Students tend to choose a college based on characteristics that are important to them and where benefits outweigh costs.

Many factors seem to answer the question of what influences a prospective student's college choice. In this study with Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College, they included location, cost, image, reputation, characteristics, quality, interpersonal connections, and direct marketing. Most of these influences patterned those found in the literature review. Exceptions to these influences from the literature were factors that were related to tribal connections and specific comments about the campus beauty. These comments could, however, be categorized under characteristics much like students who choose a college for its religious or other similar affiliation.

It is this writer's opinion that there is much to learn about this subject, particularly for the tribal college point-of-view. Further and more in-depth study may reveal greater differences in how tribal community college students are influenced in their college choice in comparison to other community college students. It is knowledge that may hold great value especially for a young, developing institution in the process of forming its vision.

Chapter Two

Review of Literature

Introduction

Students are influenced in many ways when choosing a higher education institution to attend. These influential factors are key for a student to make a successful enrollment decision. It is also important for an educational institution's growth and stability to enroll students who will persist and graduate. Chapter two of this study will review concepts in the literature regarding student college choice as it relates to this particular problem. The problem in this study is that little is known about the factors that influence students to attend Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College.

The main sections of this chapter include a historical background regarding college admissions, a discussion of the importance of college choice theory, a three-stage process of college choice including in-depth review of factors within each phase, a brief overview of tribal colleges, and a matrix of key literature.

The purpose of this research project is to examine factors that influence students to attend college. In this case, the study will explore the specific factors that influence students to attend a tribal college in northeastern Minnesota. Once these variables have been discovered, this information can be used for enhancing student recruitment activities by the college.

Historical Background

One of the most challenging areas in higher education is the area of student admissions, or the more current term, enrollment management (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997). Early in the development of college admissions practices, American college presidents canvassed the countryside seeking funds and students. During the 19th century, structured admissions practices began to emerge. These pioneering admissions staff members operated more from an admissions focus rather than one based on recruitment or marketing (Hossler, 1984). Admissions representatives promoted their own admissions statements and entrance requirements.

The "Golden Age" of American Higher Education began after World War II and the passage of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act (the GI Bill of Rights)(Brubacher and Rudy, 1997; Hossler, 1984; Kotler & Fox 1985). This legislation had a profound impact on colleges and universities as it provided federal subsidies for returning military personnel. What also was significant during this time was the availability of higher education to citizens other than those in the upper economic classes. Many first-generation students began to attend college during this time. Also important in providing access to higher education was the Higher Education Act of 1965 that encouraged college attendance through financial aid and other programs. This legislative act, combined with the large numbers of students from the baby boom generation, caused enrollment and system expansion in colleges and universities to soar thirty years ago (Hossler, 1984, Kotler & Fox, 1985).

Shortly after the passage of the Higher Education Act in 1965, societal attitudes regarding higher education underwent change. The value of a college education began to be questioned and college graduates experienced more difficulty in finding a good job. In 1971, after a hundred years of growth, predictions began to be made that college enrollments would begin to decline (Berge, 1998; Hossler & Bean, 1990; Paulsen, 1990b; Zummuto, 1986). This, coupled with the fact that college education costs began to rise, was cause for concern with college and university administrators. In addition, pressure from ethnic groups and others influenced colleges and universities to keep pace with the evolving society (Brubacher and Rudy, 1997). As a result, the enrollment management field has emerged as an area of critical importance for higher education institutions.

Enrollment management is a set of practices that interact with each other to organize the current and prospect student populations. It often includes student marketing and admission, financial aid, academic retention and student services, new student orientation, and other activities. The goal of enrollment management is not only to admit students but also to retain them at the institution. Maintaining enrollment has become a critical concern for most institutions. In a recent report, Sevier (1997a) states that recruiting students must be one of a college's most important activities and it must be supported at the highest level possible. For the colleges and universities with higher selection criteria, appropriate enrollment management means maintaining or enhancing a student body with specific and desired characteristics. For less selective institutions, it is a vital concern to attract the necessary number of students for financial reasons and sheer survival. It has been stated that perhaps the most important role an enrollment manager plays is to assist students as they select the college that best meets their needs and interests (Hossler, 1984; Kotler and Fox, 1985).

Understanding Why College Choice Theory is Important

Sevier (1997c) states that colleges and universities exist in a society that is changing at a mind-boggling pace. To keep up with the changing environment, higher education institutions must review processes and procedures that, while often traditional and historical, are not appropriate or cost effective to compete effectively in the current marketplace. Because of the rapidly changing world, it is important that higher education institutions position themselves to enhance their potential for success during an uncertain future. College and universities must consider best, worst, and most likely scenarios and be prepared to manage these situations (Aaker, 1988; Zummuto, 1986). If they do so, they are better prepared for what is yet to happen in higher education. Higher education institutions are responsible for anticipating market trends and activities that may affect them. They alone have a special obligation to accomplish whatever steps are necessary to build and maintain the college or university's viability and mission (Zemsky & Oedel, 1983).

Each year institutions of higher education spend millions of dollars to recruit and enroll students. Many schools have adopted strategic market research methods to assess and analyze their student populations. However, far more schools depend on intuition and past experience to conduct marketing related activities. Many schools fail to develop a profile of potential students who are most likely to be interested in their institution, thus literally wasting those millions of dollars (Hossler, Vesper & Braxton,1991). It is critical for colleges and universities to understand relationships of characteristics possessed by students, parents, and other influential individuals. It is also necessary to understand how these characteristics influence the decision-making of the students. Schultz (1997) calls it an "outside-in view of customers." As a result of understanding these characteristics, enrollment managers are able to create efficient and effective recruitment strategies that, in the end, will meet the institution's enrollment objectives. Effective enrollment planning and forecasting are key marketing oriented objectives. The tactics positively influence the enrollment decision-making process of prospective students (Paulsen, 1990b).

As mentioned above, the study of student enrollment decision-making or college choice behavior is an extremely practical operation that leads to greater efficiency and effectiveness. Understanding college choice behavior enables an institution to estimate the probability of student interest and enrollment. Understanding these characteristics assists enrollment managers with determining tactics to best reach these students through vehicles such as advertising, personal attention, and other similar marketing techniques (Paulsen, 1990b).

Much of the existing literature on college choice behavior utilizes some variation of a three-phase process. Stage one is called predisposition or the college aspiration formation stage. Stage two, the search stage, includes the assessing and review of college options. The third stage, called decision, involves the selection of the institution the student will attend (Berge, 1998; Hossler, Vesper & Braxton, 1991; Hossler, 1984; Hossler & Bean, 1990; Jackson, 1986; Paulsen, 1990b; Sharp, Johnson, Kurotsuchi & Waltman,1996; Weiler, 1994). Within these phases are a number of distinguishing elements. The following discussion describes the three-stage decision-making process and the factors included in these stages.

The Three-Stage Process of College Choice

Stage One - Predisposition

The predisposition stage is simply when students decide to continue or not to continue their education after graduating from high school. It is the stage that is most heavily influenced by factors unique to an individual and begins with a preference or an attitude toward college enrollment. The factors leading to predisposition are not well understood. Colleges and universities have little affect on student college choice in at this point in the process (Hossler, 1984; Hossler & Gallagher, 1987). It is these individual factors and processes that influence and shape a student's educational aspirations (Paulsen, 1990b).

The development of these aspirations to continue education beyond the high school level can take place over a long period of time from childhood through high school and sometimes beyond. From early childhood, many prospective students develop perceptions about attending college (Maguire & Lay, 1981). It is considered a life decision that has ramifications for students and their families. It affects family ties and friendships, as well as vocational and career plans. Choosing to attend college may serve as an indirect measure of methods to achieve desired goals such as career opportunities, admission to graduate or professional school, intellectual development, and social status. College attendance is often also considered a slowed transition to adult behaviors (Galotti & Kozberg, 1996). Clinton (1989) suggests that a person's perceptions and attitudes are reliable indicators of their intent and behavior. Therefore, an in-depth analysis of these perceptions and attitudes are important to understand prior to the understanding of college choice characteristics and the development of a successful marketing strategy.

A number of factors are typically significant in the formation of a student's college attendance aspirations or predisposition to attend college. They include a general understanding or awareness that the student would attend college, self-awareness of college-level academic ability, living in a close proximity to a higher education institution, high school academic curriculum, involvement in high school activities, knowledge of available financial aid, friends attending college, and the influence of family, friends and other individuals. These characteristics suggest a student's level of predisposition to attend college as well as the desire or plan to reach an educational goal (Stage & Rushin, 1993). Following is a more detailed discussion of these factors affecting a student's predisposition to attending college.

Factors influencing predisposition

1. General understanding or awareness of college attendance

Borus and Carpenter (1984) state that a potential student's home environment may affect the decision to pursue higher education. Families with certain characteristics may be more oriented toward college attendance. These characteristics include homes with substantial reading material in them, where parents, fathers in particular, have experienced higher education, and where the student's parents are born in the United States. In addition to family characteristics that influence a student's predisposition to attend college, the prospective student's personal aspirations have an important impact on the decision to attend college. Aspirations and career plans of potential students are key indicators of college attendance. In addition, students who valued education were more likely to choose to attend college (Hossler, 1984). Jackson (1986) stated that in a study to examine individual values and attributes that influence college attendance, a strong desire to attend a post-secondary institution was the single most important factor correlated to college enrollment.

2. Self-awareness of college-level academic ability

Students who are aware of their ability to achieve academic success in college tend to attempt post-secondary education (Hossler, 1984). Individual self-selection plays a critical role in the predisposition to attend college (Manski & Wise, 1983). Factors leading to this self-awareness include grade point average, standardized test scores, and class rank. These factors support this characteristic of college attendance goals. Hossler (1984) states that 80 percent of high school students who reported excellent grades planned to enroll in college. Seventy percent of the students ranked in the upper 50% of their graduating class plan to go on to college. Finally, students with high standardized test scores all tend to attend college indicating that student academic ability is an important factor in predicting college enrollment behavior.

3. Close proximity to a higher education institution

A study by Kohn, Manski & Mundel (1976) discusses that an important factor in student predisposition to attend college is the close proximity of a higher education institution to home. It was found that a low-cost, nearby college was an important stimulator of a student's decision to further his or her education. Hossler & Gallagher (1987) also concluded that the proximity to a college campus does affect college attendance rates. Students who live close to a campus are more likely to attend college though they may not attend the campus located near home.

4. High school academic curriculum

High school characteristics are included as a variable unique to the individual. Students in college preparatory curricula are more likely to move directly from high school to college. High school programs that emphasize greater amounts of mathematics and science tend to graduate students with a greater predisposition for college attendance (Berge, 1998; Borus & Carpenter, 1984; Hossler, 1984; National Assessment of Vocational Education [NAVE], 1994; Ordovensky, 1995; Sharp et al, 1996; Weiler, 1994). Heath (1993) also states that the quality or status of the high school plays a role in a prospective student's decision to attend college. Hossler (1984) also reinforced this factor in his theory of college choice.

5. Involvement in high school activities

Borus and Rushin (1993) found in a study of prospective college students that high school activities were a positive predictor of a student's predisposition to attend college. Successful participation in high school activities are related to the predisposition and achievement in college (Hossler & Gallagher, 1987; Manski & Wise, 1983). Students who were involved in activities such as clubs and organizations were more likely to attend college.

6. Knowledge of available financial aid

Students are increasingly knowledgeable about the rising costs of college attendance. Students who are aware of possible financial aid in the forms of public grants and the indirect effect of parental income in acquiring this aid have been found to increase the probability of college enrollment (Lauer, 1998; Schwartz, 1985). In addition, Hossler & Gallagher (1987) state that early information on financial aid, as well as institutional costs, are important stimulators in predisposition to college attendance.

7. Friends attending college

Kohn, Manski & Mundel (1976) and Manski & Wise (1983) state that there is a peer effect that affects a student's predisposition to attend a post-secondary institution. They state that the larger the proportion of a student's classmates plan to enroll in college, the more likely that he or she will also make this choice. Jackson's (1988) study determined having college-bound friends was almost as important in attendance decisions as were factors of high school curriculum and involvement in extracurricular activities. The influence of friends planning to continue their education plays an important role in a student's decision to attend college (Hossler & Gallagher, 1987; Sharp et al, 1996).

8. Influence of parents

Parents possess the greatest influence in a student's decision to attend college. Parents who consistently encourage their children to further their education help determine the likelihood of a student entering college (Hossler, 1984; Weiler, 1994). In a study by Stage and Rushin (1993), parental encouragement directly and indirectly influenced student goal commitment. Parents influenced both aspirations and plans. To some degree, parental socioeconomic status and combined parental income and education levels were additional indicators of influence on potential students (Murphy, 1981; Schwartz, 1985).

9. Influence of other individuals

People (other than parents and friends) who are respected by or who have close relationships to high school students can play a role in the college enrollment decision. Family members, teachers, guidance counselors, and admissions counselors can influence the predisposition to attending college (Hossler, 1984).

10. Influence of friends

Hossler (1984) reports that friends can be almost as important as parents in the decision to attend college. Weiler (1994) is blunt in his research study by stating peer pressure is a variable or factor that influences a student's predisposition to attend college. Student preferences are sensitive to peer opinions and the need to maintain a sense of social belonging (Zemsky & Oedel, 1983).

Summary

In the first stage of the college choice model, factors relating to predisposition are examined. These factors include: a general understanding or awareness that the student would attend college, self-awareness of college-level academic ability, living in a close proximity to a higher education institution, high school academic curriculum, involvement in high school activities, knowledge of available financial aid, friends attending college, and the influence of family, friends and other individuals. In this college choice model, these factors of predisposition are likely to influence the second and third stages (Bateman & Spruill, 1996). Following the review of these unique influences, the next stage of college choice, search, can be considered as part of strategic marketing program.

Stage Two – Search

The second phase of the college choice process is search. This stage involves potential students seeking and acquiring information about different post-secondary institutions. It may also include learning about the characteristics a student should consider (Hossler & Gallagher, 1987). Students learn about important characteristics such as academic programs, faculty expertise, social atmosphere, financial aid, career placement, and others. This information is gathered in a number of ways including reading publications, talking with admissions representatives, visiting campus, searching the Internet, and other methods (Paulsen, 1990b). During this phase, students begin to prioritize their preferences for the types of institutions they may consider. It is important to note that at this point the characteristics of the post-secondary institution begin to influence a student's preferences. Until this point, college choice variables were largely individual (Hossler, 1984). In this stage, colleges and universities may have a small impact on the decision-making processes of students (Hossler & Gallagher, 1987).

In the search stage, students gather information about educational possibilities and often assemble a consideration set of desirable characteristics in the ideal post-secondary institution. The search stage is not static and is variable, dependent on the student. In this stage, some students have a greater need for information than others do. Some students spend months gathering information while others make a decision in a relatively short amount of time (Hossler & Gallagher, 1987; Kotler & Fox, 1985; Sevier, 1998; Weiler, 1994;). Students with parents that have had some college experience tend to begin this stage earlier than other students (Galotti & Mark, 1994). Bateman & Spruill (1996) also state that in this stage economic variables begin to carry more influence in the college choice process. This variable continues to be important in the third stage of the model.

The search stage, while complicated, often achieves the desired goal. However, there are situations that occur that are not effective in this part of the three-stage process. Students do not always use the information gathered in the search stage in a completely rational manner. Very often, students and their families do not understand all the factors involved in college attendance. This may lead to dependence on other individuals, including high school counselors and admissions representatives. This lack of information and parameters of a well-defined search may limit a student's options and eliminate potentially excellent college choices (Hossler & Gallagher, 1987).

Stage Three – Choice

Choice is the last step of the process. In this stage, prospective students identify and evaluate institutions that possess the characteristics in their consideration sets and submit applications for admission. These decisions to apply for admission after having included the institution in the consideration set are generally based on the fit of the desired characteristics and those possessed by the college or university. A broad list of possible colleges and universities will be narrowed to a small choice set. Ultimately, the student will enroll in one of these colleges or universities (Hossler, 1984; Kotler & Fox, 1985; Weiler, 1994). At this stage, colleges and universities have only a limited level of influence on the student (Hossler & Gallagher, 1987).

Often, this choice process will be complicated. Students must react to a wide variety of information received in a multiple number of ways (Maguire & Lay, 1981). A 1992 study of college-bound high school students (Galotti & Mark, 1994) observed students in the choice process. This research examined student perceptions and experiences in choosing a college. In this study, students described the factors they were considering in a college and ranked their importance. They then considered their college or university options and how each institution scored based on their group of factors. From this rating system, a college selection is often made.

Parents are a very important part of the choice process. Students and parents tend to develop similar college preferences. Often, but not always, student and parent individual consideration sets are blended into one single choice set. This choice set determines the institutions that a student submits applications for admission (Zemsky & Oedel, 1983).

At the successful completion of the search and choice phases, students generally have an increased sense of certainty and readiness about their decision. They are often optimistic and satisfied about the information and their choices as a result of the process (Galotti & Kozberg, 1996).

A number of variables influence students in both the search phase and in the choice phase. A total of twenty-four (24) items emerged from the literature on college choice. They include: college reputation, college academic quality, faculty expertise, campus atmosphere, campus location, college cultural uniqueness, academic programs, hospitality/friendliness, social activities, campus safety, campus size, educational facilities, employment opportunities after graduation, class size, cost, financial aid availability, advice of family members, advice of friends, advice of teachers or guidance counselors, college published materials, college Web sites, college advertising, college representatives, and the campus visit. These factors are discussed in more detail in the following section of this paper.

Influential factors in the search and choice stages

The following factors emerged most often as factors influencing the search and choice phases of the student college choice model:

1. College reputation

Institutional image or reputation has a tremendous effect on college choice. It is a powerful influence on potential students and college reputation is extremely persuasive in the college search and selection process. Students value the reputation of a college and it rates highly as an influential factor by students in the college choice process (Adebayo, 1995; Maguire, 1981; McDonough & Antonio, 1996; Murphy, 1981; Sevier, 1992; Sevier, 1986; Straus & Van De Water, 1997). Many students make their search and choice decisions based on institutional image or reputation (Sevier, 1994). In Sevier's 1986 study, more than 70 percent of the students surveyed stated that an institution's reputation was the number one factor influencing their college choice. Students using reputation as a search and choice factor keep in mind the institution's general reputation as a high-quality college or university (Choy, Ottinger & Carroll, 1998).

2. College academic quality

In a study by Rickman & Green (1993), academic quality was a central factor in the college decision-making process for students. However, many different items contributed to the area of academic excellence. They included academic strength in specific programs, the overall academic reputation of the school, and the perceived quality of the student community. In a study by Manski & Wise (1983), academic quality was found to be the most important determinant in the search and selection stages. Students also considered access a part of academic quality in their choice process (Sevier, 1998).

3. Faculty expertise

King, Kobayashi & Bigler (1986) suggest that an important motivator for student college choice were the college faculty members who made strong impressions on prospective students. These faculty members demonstrated competence and knowledge in his or her respective academic fields. Furthering this thought, when a faculty member individually contacts a potential student, this attention is often a positive influence regarding the college search and choice process (Hossler, Bean & Associates, 1990).

4. Campus atmosphere

The college atmosphere or environment generally refers to a type of institution, social prestige, and other factors (Jackson, 1986). The campus setting, including the types of students who were enrolled, was a factor important in the search and choice process (King, Kobayashi & Bigler, 1986). Also included in this area are factors such as campus appearance and physical setting. These characteristics are important to potential students (Absher & Crawford, 1996; Galotti & Mark, 1994).

5. Campus location

The location of a campus can influence students in a number of different ways. Research has consistently shown that where a college or university is located can be a major factor in a potential student's decision to apply and enroll (Sevier, 1996). Location can include proximity or distance. Some students may be looking for a school close to their hometown or place of work for convenience and accessibility (Absher & Crawford, 1996, Sevier, 1994). Other students may search and select an institution far from home for the experience of living on campus or on their own. Some students may search for or choose a college based on specific location criteria because of the recreation or cultural activities it may offer. Some students may simply choose a school because they liked the location (Choy, Ottinger & Carroll, 1998). Finally, Sevier (1997b) states that prospective students want education nearby with convenient hours of operation.

6. College cultural uniqueness

College campuses, like individuals, have unique personalities. The characteristics that make a college unique have an important impact on a prospective student's college choice process. These cultural features explain existing behavior and the environment that exists at an institution (Hossler, 1984). Some colleges consider these values to be at the center of all activities and continue to reinforce these aspects (Boyer, 1997). Cultural values continue to be a vital influence for some students. Many students are influenced by a college's commitment to cultural values and this reputation alone may be a significant factor in decision making (Hill, 1995; McDonough & Antonio, 1996; St.

Cyr, 1994; Stock & Schmid, 1980). A study by St. John (1991) found that student college choice is influenced by the social and cultural background of the selected institution.

7. Academic Programs

In an annual study of students on why they made the college choice that they did, the availability of an academic program was consistently listed as one of the main influencing factors (Sevier, 1994). The importance of this particular factor was also reinforced in a study by Erdmann (1983). In this study, Erdmann found that the availability of specific academic programs was the single most important factor in the college selection process. Litten (1982) also found that academic program options were a significant influence to prospective students.

8. Hospitality/Friendliness

Students are interested in the social environment of a campus. They want to know if students are open and willing to help others. Students want to feel accepted and that they fit in with the current students. They want to know if the current students are proud of their school. They want to be able to access other students and faculty members via e-mail to get their questions answered (Absher & Crawford, 1996; Hube, 1997; Sevier & Kappler, 1996; Sevier, 1998). In a study by Henley & Rogers (1997), the friendliness of a college campus was an impressive factor for potential students. Students in this study selected a campus because they felt they could stop and talk with any individual.

9. Social activities

Campus activities such as cultural events and sporting games are useful for influencing students in the search and choice stages (Dortch, 1997; Weiler, 1996). In Litten's (1982) research, participation in campus clubs and activities as well as outdoor programs and recreation were significant influences for a prospective student.

10. Campus safety

Prospective students consider campus safety an influential factor in the college choice process (Absher & Crawford, 1996). In an annual national college-choice survey conducted by Stamats Communication, Inc., campus safety was one of the top nine factors that prospective students consider. This is a relatively new factor of critical importance to prospective students and their families that has emerged in the last five years (Sevier & Kappler, 1996; Sevier, 1998).

11. Campus size

The size of the campus is often an important factor to potential students (Absher & Crawford, 1996; Erdmann, 1983, Hossler, Vesper & Braxton, 1991). Students will include colleges and universities in their search and choice processes based on comfort levels. Some students prefer a smaller campus with personal attention while others look for a large college or university with more anonymity. In a survey-based study by Erdmann (1983), campus size was one of the most important influences in the college selection process, consistently outweighing other factors.

12. Educational facilities

Educational facilities such as classrooms, laboratories, and libraries are important in a student's selection of a college or university (Absher & Crawford, 1996; Straus & Van De Water, 1997). The quality of academic teaching facilities was also rated as one of the most important factors potential students are influenced by in the college decision process (Sevier, 1998). However, students are only positively influenced by excellent facilities if access is available to them (Sevier & Kappler, 1996).

13. Employment opportunities after graduation

Students are often attracted to post-secondary education because of the career opportunities it may provide (Adebayo, 1995; Gray, 1996; National Assessment of Vocational Education, 1994; Sevier, 1998). Paulsen (1990a) states that students often make college choices based on existing job opportunities for college graduates. Students are interested in outcomes. They are influenced by what graduates are doing, what graduate schools they attend and contributions that they are making to society (Sevier, 1997a). Students are considering placement rates as part of their search and choice process. They want to be well prepared to compete in the marketplace (Perry, 1995).

14. Class size

In a study of hundreds of college-bound students, class size ranked as one of the top ten influences in a student's search and choice process (Straus & Van De Water, 1997). Students will tend to consider and select a college they are comfortable with for their future education. Some students prefer larger class sizes while others prefer a class with a lower student-teacher ratio.

15. Cost

Price enters college choice studies in three different ways. They include the price of tuition, the total cost of college attendance including tuition, living expenses and transportation, or tuition and living expenses adjusted for financial aid. Price is a negative influence on college choice while financial aid to reduce costs is a positive influence (Jackson, 1986). Often, during the search phase, students include colleges and universities in the consideration sets that they can afford. Cost is a major influence for students. It helps define the group of institutions they consider options for themselves for their further education (Choy, Ottinger & Carroll, 1998; Sevier, 1994; Weiler, 1996).

16. Availability of financial aid

Financial aid awards are a significant influence on prospective students. Rising college costs are a serious issue and students are sensitive to this issue. In the last decade, financial aid is the factor that has become increasingly more important for prospective students (Lauer, 1998; Spiegler, 1998). In a study of more than 2500 college-bound students, the receipt of any financial aid was found to significantly and positively influence student college choice (Somers & St. John, 1993). As a result, students who receive financial aid awards are more likely to enter college (Jackson, 1988; Litten, 1982; Manski & Wise, 1983; St. John, 1991). Financial aid awards affect the net cost of college attendance. This means that financial aid reduces total college costs for students and their families. Weiler (1996) found that the institutional choices by students were influenced by the net attendance costs.

17. Advice of family members

In the study by King, Kobayashi & Bigler (1986), family members were the most important personal source of information about the college search and choice process. This influence was also found in a study by Adebayo (1995). Clinton (1989) also states that a student may select a post-secondary institution based on parental advice. Parents are involved in the basic question – to attend or not attend college and then which school to attend. Most parents are involved in the college search and decision process to some degree and often are a source of significant influence (Buford, 1987; Litten, 1982; Murphy, 1981; Rowe, 1980; Sevier, 1986; Sharp et al, 1996).

18. Advice of friends

One of the leading influences for potential students are their friends. Potential students gain a great deal of information about colleges and universities and consider this data as they make their college choices (Johnson, Stewart & Eberly 1991; Murphy, 1981; Rowe, 1980). A study by Adebayo (1995) determined that friends were one of the major information sources that affected a student's college choice. Sevier (1998) found that the student college choice process is influenced a great deal by student peers. Students are reluctant to choose a college that may elicit negative response by friends. In an earlier study by Sevier (1986), friends were rated as the number one influence (40.1% of the sample) in a student's college choice process.

19. Advice of teachers or guidance counselors

Teachers are influential players during a prospective student's college search and choice processes (Graves, 1989; Johnson,1991; Rowe, 1980; Stewart & Eberly, 1991). High school counselors can have a strong impact on student search and choice processes. This is particularly true in secondary schools where the student-to-counselor ratio is low, or when families hire private college counselors to assist with the college choice process (Hossler, 1998). Sanders (1986) found that high school guidance counselors often identified factors that had been missed or not understood during a college search and choice process. It is interesting to note in this study that high school counselors provided a more significant subtle influence than realized on the process than first noticed by potential students.

20. College published materials

In a study conducted by Maguire (1981), college published materials such as the undergraduate catalog, financial aid brochures, and others were rated as very important sources of information by prospective students. These materials, including card decks, video tapes, audio compact disks and CD-ROM, college guides, and others are easily available to students (Sevier, 1997b). Students are interested in the image of the institutions they are considering and college materials are an important source of portraying this image (Perry, 1995). Galotti & Mark (1994) found that students make use of different college materials and that the use of these materials increases and becomes more important during the search and choice stages.

21. College Web site

Today's students, without a doubt, are the most technologically advanced and experienced than any previous generation. These students have access to and use technology in greater numbers than ever before. Many students have a computer available for use at home and at school, often with Internet access. College web sites are important sources of information for prospective students. In a 1996 study of college-bound students, nearly 11 percent spend two hours or more a day on the Internet. The web's influence is dramatically increasing each year, especially with advancing technology and its ability to deliver messages in a creative and personal manner with great speed and efficiency (Sevier, 1997b; Sevier & Kappler, 1996).

22. College advertising

Students are influenced by a wide variety of advertising in various media. These vehicles include newspaper, press releases, radio, television, and outdoor advertising (Schultz, 1997). College marketing through the media has grown tremendously in the last ten years. Television and radio advertising have been shown to be particularly effective in building institutional image and visibility, especially in specific geographical areas (Hossler, Bean & Associates, 1990).

23. College representatives

Maguire (1981) found that visits to high schools by college admissions representatives were rated as an extremely effective influence for prospective students. These visits often include review of college-published materials, individual discussions with prospective students and the opportunity for a question-and-answer session with an individual possessing first-hand knowledge about a particular institution. College representatives were rated as a top influential factor in a study by Rowe (1980). These visits can be very conducive and beneficial for both the student and the admissions representative (Hossler, Bean & Associates, 1990). Another interesting finding was in a study by Litten (1982). Students with parents who possessed higher education tended to utilize the expertise of college admission representatives more in the college search and choice process than other students.

24. Campus visit

A campus visit provides value to both the student and the institution. A campus visit ensures a good match between the student and the college. Students come to campus with certain expectations such as meeting current students who are like them or instructors who show an interest in them. The campus visit is often a college or university's best recruiting tools. It is a major factor in the decision-making process (Henley & Rogers, 1997; Rubins, 1985; Ralph & Vancko, 1997; Sevier, 1992). King, Kobayashi & Bigler (1986) found that the campus visit was a major influence in student college choice. Hossler, Bean & Associates (1990) found that the campus visit was the most important factor influencing a student's enrollment decision. The personal attention received by a student during a campus visit was a major motivator for student college selection. In this study, the campus visit was rated by a large number of students as the most important source of information in their college search and choice process. The influence of the campus visit was similar in a study by Maguire (1981).

Summary

This section reviews twenty-four factors that influence the student college search and choice process. These items include: college reputation, college academic quality, faculty expertise, campus atmosphere, campus location, college cultural uniqueness, academic programs, hospitality and friendliness, social activities, campus safety, campus size, educational facilities, employment opportunities after graduation, class size, cost, availability of financial aid, advice of family members, advice of friends, advice of teachers or guidance counselors, college published materials, college Web site, college advertising, college representatives and the campus visit. When considering these factors or variables, students acquire valuable information to develop consideration sets of desirable characteristics in the ideal college or university. These consideration sets ultimately assist with the college choice process. Students select colleges that meet these criteria and, using this system, make a college choice that will be appropriate for the individual.

The problem statement for this project centers on why students choose to attend a tribal college. It seems appropriate to review the background of U.S. tribal colleges in order to gain a full understanding of the scope of this research.

Tribal college overview

After World War II and the U.S. government's declaration of self-determination for American Indians, the importance of higher education became more apparent. A college education could be used to improve and encourage growth on the reservation. This belief was one factor key in founding tribal colleges in the United States (Swisher & Tippeconnic, 1999).

Two barriers existed for American Indian students. First, many American Indian students faced problems with traditional admissions practices. The second obstacle, was the concern regarding retention once enrolled in a post-secondary program. The dropout rate for American Indian students is substantial, with many institutions reporting rates of 90 percent or higher (Boyer, 1997). Because of this reality, American Indian leaders took action and the first tribally run college was founded in 1968 on a Navajo reservation. Once this first institution was created, other tribal colleges quickly began in California, North Dakota, and South Dakota. These colleges were patterned after the traditional community college model with a philosophy of local control and dedication to local needs and culture (Boyer, 1997; Hill, 1995; Pavel, 1999).

Each tribal college in the United States is unique. The colleges represent the individual needs and culture of the sponsoring reservation. However, the tribal colleges have many things in common including the areas of governance, students, and financial requirements (Boyer, 1997).

Tribal colleges are established and controlled by an American Indian tribe and a board of directors. Members of these governing boards are generally American Indian. The college attempts to maintain an administrative autonomy from the local reservation tribal government, and most of the tribal college presidents are American Indian.

Tribal colleges often have a student body consisting of a majority who are American Indian. Enrollment at tribal institutions tends to be in a growth mode. Enrollment is dependent on the community it serves as well as the length of time the college has been established. Tribal colleges are also attracting more and more non-American Indian students. This enrollment trait is a function of increased institutional reputation and the establishment of programs attractive to students (Boyer, 1997).

Funding for tribal colleges is a concern like it is for most higher education institutions. Financial support is provided through student tuition, by federal and state government, and privately through foundation grants. Like many non-tribal colleges, federal funding is always a problem because resources have not kept up with student needs in the past several years. Increased appropriation is a priority for most tribal institutions (Boyer, 1997).

It is important to note that tribal colleges find a continuing struggle between two cultures and strive to maintain a balance and appropriate direction. Tribal colleges are responding to the needs of American Indian people by providing training in many areas of need to their communities. Tribal colleges are preparing teachers, healthcare workers, scientists, writers, artists and a vast number of other highly trained individuals to support not only their community needs but also the needs of world. After thirty-two years, the founding of tribal colleges is a story of optimism and hope serving not only American Indian students, but all students.

Tribal Colleges and Student College Choice

Very little literature exists regarding why students choose to attend a tribal college. Boyer (1997) states that in the early formative years of tribal colleges, students who chose to attend a tribal college were frequently older than a typical college student and often a single parent. These students selected a tribal college almost entirely because of its proximity to home. Students who now attend tribal colleges tend to be more traditional in age. These students select a tribal college for its reputation as well as for its academic programs. Cultural aspects that exist at a tribal college are also important factors for these students. Students are interested in the environmental influences that are unique to the American Indian culture such as the inclusion of nature and art.

Conclusion

Chapter two examined the existing literature regarding college choice. This review included the historical background of college choice as well as the importance and practical use of understanding the college choice process. The chapter focuses on a three-stage process of college choice: predisposition, search, and choice. Within each stage are a number of factors that are typically important in the college choice process. Predisposition includes ten unique factors while the search and choice phases include twenty-four influential factors.

Students have a near overwhelming set of post-secondary options. In making college choices, students must consider those items most important to them. They may include institutional influences such as college reputation, cultural uniqueness, available facilities, and other factors. They must consider personal influences such as family members and financial resources. They must look at demographic, socioeconomic, and other characteristics important to them. Understanding the subtleties of the college choice process will assist with a college's marketing and recruitment practices and more efficient use of college resources.

The following matrix details the identified factors with the related authors. (Table 1)

Table 1

Literature Matrix

Three-stage process of college choice	**Author** Berge (1998) Hossler, Vesper & Braxton (1991) Hossler (1984) Hossler & Bean (1990) Jackson (1986) Paulsen (1990b) Sharp, Johnson, Kurotsuchi & Waltman (1996) Weiler (1994)
Predisposition	
Factor	
General understanding or awareness of college attendance	Borus & Carpenter (1984) Hossler (1984) Jackson (1986)
Self awareness of college-level academic ability	Hossler (1984) Manski & Wise (1983)
Close proximity to a higher education institution	Kohn, Manski & Mun[illegible]el (1976) Hossler & Gallagher (1987)
High school academic program	Berge (1998) Borus & Carpenter (1984) Hossler (1984) National Assessment of Vocational Education (1994) Ordovensky (1995) Sharp et all (1996) Weiler (1994) Heath (1993)

Involvement in high school activities	Borus & Rushin (1993) Hossler & Gallagher (1987) Manski & Wise (1983)
Knowledge of available financial aid	Lauer (1998) Schwartz (1985) Hossler & Gallagher (1987)
Friends attending college	Kohn, Manski & Mundel (1976) Manski & Wise (1983) Jackson (1988) Hossler & Gallagher (1987) Sharp et all (1996)
Influence of parents	Hossler (1984) Weiler (1994) Stage & Rushin (1993) Murphy (1981) Schwartz (1985)
Influence of other individuals	Hossler (1984)
Influence of friends	Hossler (1984) Weiler (1994) Zemsky & Oedel (1983)
Search and Choice	
College Reputation	Adebayo (1995) Maguire (1981) McDonough & Antonio (1996) Murphy (1981) Seiver (1992) Sevier (1986) Straus & Van De Water (1997) Sevier (1994) Choy, Ottinger & Carroll (1998)
College academic quality	Rickman & Green (1993) Manski & Wise (1983) Sevier (1998)
Faculty expertise	King, Kobayashi & Bigler (1986) Hossler, Bean & Associates (1990)
Campus atmosphere	Jackson (1986) King, Kobayashi & Bigler (1986) Absher & Crawford (1996) Galotti & Mark (1994)
Campus location	Sevier (1996) Absher & Crawford (1996) Sevier (1994) Choy, Ottinger & Carroll (1998) Sevier (1997b)

College cultural uniqueness	Boyer (1997) Hill (1995) McDonough & Antonio (1996) St. Cyr (1994) Stock & Schmid (1980) St. John (1991) Hossler (1984)
Academic programs	Sevier (1994) Erdmann (1983) Litten (1982)
Hospitality/ friendliness	Absher & Crawford (1996) Hube (1997) Sevier & Kappler (1996) Sevier (1998) Henley & Rogers (1997)
Campus activities	Dortch (1997) Weiler (1996) Litten (1982)
Campus safety	Absher & Crawford (1996) Sevier & Kappler (1996) Sevier (1998)
Campus size	Absher & Crawford (1996) Erdmann (1983) Hossler, Vesper & Braxton (1991)
Educational facilities	Absher & Crawford (1996) Straus & Van De Water (1997) Sevier (1998) Sevier & Kappler (1996)
Employment opportunities after graduation	Adebayo (1995) Gray (1996) National Assessment of Vocational Education (1994) Sevier (1998) Paulsen (1990a) Perry (1995)
Class size	Straus & Van De Water (1997)
Cost	Jackson (1986) Choy, Ottinger & Carroll (1998) Sevier (1994) Weiler (1996)

Availability of financial aid	Lauer (1998) Spiegler (1998) Somers & St. John (1993) Jackson (1988) Litten (1982) Manski & Wise (1983) St. John (1991) Weiler (1996)
Advice of family members	King, Kobayashi & Bigler (1986) Adebayo (1995) Clinton (1989) Buford (1987) Litten (1982) Murphy (1981) Rowe (1980 Sevier (1986) Sharp et all (1996)
Advice of friends	Johnson, Stewart & Eberly (1991) Murphy (1981) Rowe (1980) Adebayo (1995) Sevier (1998) Sevier (1986)
Advice of teachers or guidance counselors	Graves (1989) Johnson, Stewart & Eberly (1991) Rowe (1980) Hossler (1998) Sanders (1986)
College published materials	Maguire (1981) Sevier (1997b) Perry (1995) Galotti & Mark (1994)
College Web site	Sevier (1997b) Sevier & Kappler (1996)
College advertising	Schultz (1997) Hossler, Bean & Associates (1990)
College representatives	Maguire (1981) Rowe (1980) Hossler, Bean & Associates (1990) Litten (1982)

Campus visit	Henley & Rogers (1997) Rubins (1985) Ralph & Vancko (1997) Sevier (1992) King, Kobayashi & Bigler (1986) Hossler, Bean & Associates (1990) Maguire (1981)

Chapter Three

Method of Study

Introduction

Chapter three will describe the research methodology used in this study. The purpose of this study is to determine factors that influence student college choice at a northeastern Minnesota tribal college. Specifically addressed in this chapter are the research design, the study institution, the population and sampling procedures, the instrumentation, data collection procedures, and the data analysis.

Research Design

One of the purposes of this study is to add to the existing literature regarding student college choice, specifically at a tribal college. In addition, the research will provide information that will assist with the development of strategic student recruitment marketing plans. These plans will identify key characteristics important to potential students and will assist with more efficient and effective marketing practices at the college.

This study has three main research questions that emerged as a result of the review of literature. These questions are:

1. What influences a student to chose to attend a post-secondary institution? (Stage One-Predisposition.)

2. What information influences a student to consider Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College? (Stage Two-Search.)

3. What are the major influences that students consider when choosing to attend Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College? (Stage Three-Choice.)

In addition, eighteen (18) sub-research questions were added to review the influential factors as they relate to the demographic characteristics of the study participants. These sub-research questions are organized under the main research questions. The sub-research questions are:

1a. By gender, what are the major factors influencing students in the predisposition stage?

1b. By age, what are the major factors influencing students in the predisposition stage?

1c. By distance from hometown, what are the major factors influencing students in the predisposition stage?

1d. By number of college credits completed, what are the major factors influencing students in the predisposition stage?

1e. By ethnic background, what are the major factors influencing students in the predisposition stage?

1f. By parental college experience, what are the major factors influencing students in the predisposition stage?

2a. By gender, what are the major factors influencing students in the search stage?

2b. By age, what are the major factors influencing students in the search stage?

2c. By distance from hometown, what are the major factors influencing students in the search stage?

2d. By number of college credits completed, what are the major factors influencing students in the search stage?

2e. By ethnic background, what are the major factors influencing students in the search stage?

2f. By parental college experience, what are the major factors influencing students in the search stage?

3a. By gender, what are the major factors influencing students in the choice stage?

3b. By age, what are the major factors influencing students in the choice stage?

3c. By distance from hometown, what are the major factors influencing students in the choice stage?

3d. By number of college credits completed, what are the major factors influencing students in the choice stage?

3e. By ethnic background, what are the major factors influencing students in the choice stage?

3f. By parental college experience, what are the major factors influencing students in the choice stage?

There is very little literature that exists related to attendance at tribal colleges. Because of this lack of information, a descriptive survey research design was chosen for this project. Merriam (1988) states that descriptive studies may be useful to provide general information about areas where little research currently exists. This descriptive research may provide a basis for continuing research in the area. This is also a quantitative study. Krathwohl (1998) states that quantitative methods of research deal with a deductive approach that includes planning and structure, validation of the questions, and describing the results using numbers (p. 27). The creative work of the study is in the investigation and preparation of the research prior to the actual data collection.

A written survey was used to collect the data in this study. Survey research is used to find out information about a population when this information is not available in another way (Kapplan & Saccuzzo, 1989). Survey research is also much more complex than simple status surveys. It attempts to seek not only the current status of a population but also tries to discover relationships within the elements of the survey (Graziano & Raulin, 1989). Surveys use a deductive orientation of the quantitative research approach (Krathwohl, 1998).

From the researcher's perspective, a written survey provided a number of advantages. The researcher could develop a survey based on the themes discovered in the literature review. A written survey was relatively inexpensive to produce and print. It was also easy to administer and provided anonymity to the respondents. Disadvantages included less opportunity for detail by the subjects and variations in the sample return.

The Study Institution

According to the 1998-2000 college catalog, Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College, located in Cloquet, Minnesota, was created by the Minnesota Legislature in 1987 and chartered as a tribal college by the Fond du Lac Reservation that same year. It has a commitment through its mission statement to meet the education needs of a diverse population.

The idea for developing a tribal college in Cloquet began in the early 1980s. The Fond du Lac Reservation Business Committee (RBC) assessed and determined that a need existed for a higher education facility in both Carlton County, where the college is located, as well as in the neighboring St. Louis County. In 1986, the Minnesota Legislature funded a feasibility study for a community college operated as a joint venture of Fond du Lac tribal government and the Arrowhead Community College Region. Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College opened in 1987, eight years after the Fond du Lac Reservation Business Committee determined a need for a community college as part of a comprehensive educational plan for the members of the tribe on the reservation. Classes were held at the Ojibwe School on the reservation and were immediately successful.

In 1987, the Bureau of Indian Affairs found that Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College was eligible for funding under the Tribally Controlled Community College Act and the Minnesota Legislature appropriated money for the college's first two years of operation. In 1989, the Minnesota Legislature authorized design development for the campus incorporating both Indian and non-Indian cultural values. The new campus was completed in 1992 and was able to accommodate 500 full-time students.

In 1994, the Bureau of Indian Affairs reconfirmed Fond du Lac as a Tribal College under the Tribal Community College Act. At the same time, Congress passed legislation giving Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College status as a Land Grant Institution. Additionally, the Minnesota Legislature approved Fond du Lac as a full college by state standards with co-governance language between the state and the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa. Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College currently enrolls 937 students who study in a wide variety of programs (Fall semester 1999 total headcount – on and off-campus students.) It is also interesting to note that 90% of the students enrolled at Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College receive state and/or federal financial aid.

Population and Sampling Procedures

Students enrolled at Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College were the target population for this study. Early in the design of this study, contact was made with the vice president for administration and student affairs and the director of public information and admissions. Both individuals indicated their interest in the project. Formal approval to proceed with the research was received from the president of the college (Appendix A).

While it was deemed nearly impossible to survey the entire population at the college due to off-site programs, variable schedules and other factors, the researcher and the college administrators decided that sampling the on-campus population was the most feasible option. Students would be surveyed at new student orientations and in a stratified random sample of the total number of on-campus classes that meet during a typical week. The stratified sample consisted of classes meeting in the morning, afternoon, and evening, on different days of the week, and in a variety of course subjects. The sampling unit was a class, not an individual, and was randomly selected from a master course list by the researcher and college administrator. The assumption regarding this stratified sample is that the characteristics of students would be different during classes offered at different times of the day. Timing of the survey administration was also important in this project. If the survey was administered late in the semester, students may not be as willing to complete the instrument due to the volume and intensity of their course loads. Survey administration early in the semester appeared be the most appropriate in order to receive information with the most directed student thought.

Instrumentation

The survey instrument that was used in this study, "Factors Influencing Student College Choice" (Appendix B), was developed by the researcher from factors derived from the literature review. This cross-sectional survey was created to measure the importance of these factors regarding why students chose to attend Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College.

A group of experienced admissions and enrollment management administrators were organized to review the draft survey instrument for content validity. These individuals were selected because of their experience in the field as well as for their knowledge of enrollment management. Many are considered experts in this area of college administration. They are employed at a variety of institutions including public and private, urban and rural, community colleges through doctoral degree granting universities. This method of validation often results in instrument refinement (Dixon & Martin, 1991).

The experts were sent a draft copy of the survey with a validation form (Appendix C). The validation form asked if the question was appropriate to the subject, if the question should be deleted, or if the question should be reworded. These individuals were provided with postpaid envelopes to return the materials to the researcher. The group of experts noted only minor adjustments to the survey consisting mostly of rewording suggestions that were incorporated into the final survey. A list of the expert's names, titles, and school affiliation is included in Appendix D.

In addition to the list of experts, a small group of administrators from Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College reviewed the survey for content and appropriateness to the population (Appendix E). This group suggested improvements to the appearance of the survey. More space was given for the overall survey plus the section directions were enlarged for ease of survey completion. Finally, the researcher's doctoral program advisor reviewed and approved the survey.

Following the survey review, application was made and granted by the University of Minnesota Institutional Review Board Human Subjects Committee to administer the survey (Appendix F).

The survey consists of a demographic section asking survey respondents to identify their age, gender, distance from home, number of college credits completed, ethnic background, and parental post-secondary experience. The next section consisted of ten (10) items regarding predisposition to college attendance. This section responds to research question number one – What influences a student to choose to attend a post-secondary institution? The second section listed twenty-four (24) items regarding the college search phase. These questions directly relate to research question number two – What information influences a student to consider Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College? The third section listed twenty-four (24) items regarding the college choice phase. These questions deal with research question number three – What are the major influences that students consider when choosing to attend Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College? The questions were reorganized in the third section due to their similarity to the search section. This was done to avoid any confusion when being completed by the students. These fifty-eight questions used a five-point Likert scale for rating by the respondents. The Likert scale was organized with one (1) as strongly disagree, two (2) as disagree, three (3) as neutral, four (4) as agree, and five (5) as strongly agree. Finally, an open-ended question was listed at the end of the survey giving respondents an opportunity to list any additional factors that may not have been included in the survey. Respondents were also given space for other comments. These qualitative questions give meaning to and reinforce the Likert scale results. The total survey consisted of 58 questions plus the open-ended question and comment area on three single pages of paper. The survey was timed to take approximately ten to fifteen minutes to complete.

Data Collection Procedures

A number of steps were followed to collect the data for this research project. They included the preparation of a statement to be read to respondents prior to the completion of the survey, the in-person administration of the survey to students at orientation and in classes, and the secure data storage once the survey was completed. This survey was directly administered to achieve an acceptable return rate.

A statement was written inviting students to participate in the research study. This statement was read out loud to the students prior to the distribution of the survey. The statement began with the purpose of the survey and the approximate time to complete the survey. Participants were informed that no risks were involved in the completion of the survey and that their participation was voluntary. Students were also informed that they could not be identified through the completion of the survey and that the completed surveys would be kept in a secure location by the researcher. Students were also informed that their participation would not affect their current or future relationship with Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College. Finally, the statement provided the researcher's name and phone number as well as the name and phone number of the researcher's advisor should any participant have questions or concerns.

Survey administration began on January 10, 2000 and was completed on January 26, 2000. This time period was selected as it was the start of a new semester at Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College. An appropriate group of new entering students as well as continuing students attending classes would be available to sample for the research. The surveys were administered in-person by the researcher and by a Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College administrator. This college administrator was fully trained in the appropriate survey administration procedure. A total of 270 surveys were completed and returned to the researcher. 42% of the total on-campus student population participated in this study.

Data Analysis

All completed surveys were handled in a routine and uniform method. As surveys were completed, they were placed in a designated container and kept in a secure and locked location. Each survey was reviewed by the researcher for completeness.

The researcher coded the demographic questions for ease of statistical processing. In the gender category, male was assigned a code of 1, female was assigned a code of 2. In the age variable, students age 24 and younger were coded as 1, students age 25 and older were coded as 2. In the distance from hometown to campus category, 0-30 miles was coded as 1, 31 or more miles was coded as 2. In the number of college credits completed category, 0-24 was assigned a code of 1, 25 or more was assigned a code of 2. For ethnic background, Caucasian was coded as number 1, African American was coded number 2, Hispanic was coded number 3, Asian was coded number 4, American Indian was coded number 5 and Other was coded as number 6. Finally, if the student responded yes to the question of parental higher education experience, the answer was assigned a code of 1. If the answer was no, the answer was assigned a code of 2.

The researcher categorized and reported the comments from the open-ended question and the comment area of the survey. These comments are located in Appendix G. An independent statistical expert was hired to enter and process the data and complete the statistical analysis. This analysis used the computer software "Statistical Package for the Social Sciences" (SPSS) for processing the data. For the analysis, descriptive statistics were employed to determine means, medians, modes, ranges, standard deviations, variances and frequency distributions for each question. These statistics will be used to describe the data. Univariate statistics were used for the variables as well as bivariate statistics that report relationships between two variables. Data was also organized into cross-tabulation tables for ease of interpretation. In addition, in order to measure the statistical significance of the relationships among the survey items, a chi-square test was used in this study. Chi-square is a commonly used test that examines frequency counts (Krathwohl, 1997). Chi-square is used to compare groups to determine if different patterns of frequencies exist in the groups (Graziano & Raulin, 1989; C. Mehrotra, personal communication, March 16, 2000). Spearman's Rank Correlation test was also used to measure the association between two variables that constitute rank orders (Weisberg, Krosnick and Bowen, 1996). Independent variables used in this study included the areas of age, gender, distance from home, number of credits completed, ethnic background and parental post-secondary experience. A p-value for statistical significance of .05 was used for all statistical analysis.

The purpose of the statistical analysis of the data is to answer the research questions that emerged from the review of literature. These questions are:

1. What influences a student to choose to attend a post-secondary institution? (Stage One-Predisposition.)
2. What information influences a student to consider Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College? (Stage Two-Search.)
3. What are the major influences that students consider when choosing to attend Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College? (Stage Three-Choice.)

The data to answer the first research question and sub-research questions 1a through 1f were taken from survey items 1-10 (see appendix B). Values of 1 and 2 indicated a moderate or high level of disagreement regarding the factor. A value of 3 or neutral indicated indifference regarding the factor. Values of 4 and 5 demonstrated a moderate and high level of agreement of the influential factor being studied.

The information used to answer the second research question and sub-research questions 2a through 2f was taken from survey items 11-34. Again, values of 1 and 2 indicated a moderate or high level of disagreement regarding the level of influence on a student's search process. The value of 3 or neutral showed no opinion regarding the factor. Moderate and high levels of agreement regarding the search factor were designated by scores of 4 and 5.

Finally, the third research question and sub-research questions 3a through 3f utilized survey questions 35-58. Values of 1 and 2 indicated a moderate or high level of disagreement regarding the influential factor. The value of 3 or neutral showed no disagreement or agreement regarding the factor and the values of 4 and 5 showed moderate and high levels of agreement regarding the factor influencing college choice.

At the end of the survey, an open-ended question was included for the participants to answer. This question requested the respondent to include any additional factors that influenced their college decision that were not included in the survey. A second area was included for participants to write any additional comments. The written responses to the question and the comment area were compiled and are included in Appendix G.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to outline the methods used in this research project. A review of the research design was provided as the basis of the research. The population and sample that was surveyed was described. The chapter includes a detailed explanation of the instrument design. It describes the testing and approvals by groups of experts in the field. The method for collecting the data was reviewed. Finally, the method for processing the data and its statistical analysis was also included in this section. Chapter four will examine the results of this data.

Chapter Four

Results

Introduction

The results of this study on factors influencing student college choice at a northeastern Minnesota tribal college are presented in this chapter. Once again, the purpose of this study is to identify factors that influence students to attend Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College. There are three main research questions: 1. What influences a student to choose to attend a post-secondary institution? (Stage one-predisposition), 2. What information influences a student to consider Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College? (Stage two-search), and 3. What are the major influences that students consider when choosing to attend Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College? (Stage three-choice). In addition, eighteen (18) sub-research questions are included in this project based on the study constructs. Chapter four includes a reporting of the demographic characteristics of the students surveyed at the study institution as well as a statistical analysis of the survey data based on the study research questions and sub-questions.

Demographic characteristics of the study respondents

A total of 270 students participated in this study representing 42% of the entire Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College on-campus student population. Survey participants were asked to respond to six demographic areas. They included identifying their gender and age, how far the college was located from their hometown, how many college credits they had completed, their ethnic background and if one or more of their parents had attended college. The results of these questions are detailed in the following paragraphs.

Gender

Of the 270 survey participants, one hundred and fifteen (115) or 42.8% were male. One hundred and fifty-four (154) or 57.2% were female. One survey was returned with the gender question unanswered accounting for .4% of the total response.

Age

Two hundred and fifty eight (258) participants responded to the age question. For the purposes of this study, the researcher organized the ages of the survey respondents into two (2) groups. Group one was age 24 and younger and group two was age 25 and older. Respondents age 24 and younger (group one) numbered 165 or 61.1% of individuals answering the age question. There were 93 (34.4 %) participants who identified themselves as age 25 or older. There were twelve (12) missing answers in the age characteristic that accounts for 4.4% of the total response. The mean age for the respondents was 24.5, the mode age was 19 and the median age was 21.

Distance from hometown

Survey respondents for this characteristic numbered 267. Respondents were asked if the distance to their hometown from campus was 0 to 30 miles or if the distance to their hometown from campus was 31 miles or more. Two hundred and three (203) respondents stated that their hometown was 30 miles or less from campus (75.2%). Sixty-four (64) participants answered that their hometown was 31 miles or more from campus representing 23.7%. There were three (3) missing answers representing 1.1% of the total response.

Number of college credits completed

Survey participants were asked if they had completed 24 college credits or less or if they had completed 25 college credits or more. Two hundred and sixty five respondents (265) answered this question. Respondents indicated that 153 (56.7%) had completed 24 college credits or less and one hundred and twelve (112) or 41.5% of the survey participants had completed 25 credits or more. There were five (5) survey participants that did not answer this question accounting for 1.9% of the total response.

Ethnic background

Two hundred and sixty-five (265) survey respondents answered the ethnic background question. There were six ethnic classifications to select from on the survey. They included Caucasian, African-American, Hispanic, Asian, American Indian and other. One hundred and ninety-eight (198) or 73.3 % of the survey participants listed their ethnic background as Caucasian, seven (7) or 2.6% of the participants were African-American, six (6) or 2.2% of the participants were Hispanic, four (4) or 1.5% of the participants were Asian, forty-six (46) or 17% of the participants listed their ethnic background as American Indian, and four (4) or 1.5% of the participants listed their ethnic background as other. There were five (5) respondents that did not list their ethnic background accounting for 1.9% of the total response.

College experience of parents

In this final characteristic, survey participants were asked if one or more of their parents had attended college. Two hundred and sixty-eight (268) participants responded to this survey question. One hundred and forty-three (143) or 53% of the participants indicated that their parents had attended college. There were 125 or 46.3 % of the participants that answered that their parents had not attended college. There were two (2) respondents that did not answer this question accounting for .7% of the total response.

Research questions

Research question 1

What influences a student to choose to attend a post-secondary institution? (Stage one-predisposition).

Data to answer this question was taken from survey questions number 1 – 10 addressing factors in the predisposition stage. For review, these questions are listed below:

1. I always knew I would attend college.
2. I have always thought that I am academically capable of attending college.
3. Living close to a higher education institution influenced my decision to attend college.
4. The curriculum in my high school influenced my decision to attend college.
5. My involvement in high school activities influenced my decision to attend college.
6. Knowledge of available financial aid influenced my decision to attend college.

7. Most of my friends are attending college.

8. My family influenced my decision to attend college.

9. People other than my family influenced my decision to attend college.

10. My friends influenced my decision to attend college.

Respondents answered these questions using the responses of (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neutral, (4) agree and (5) strongly agree. The answers to these questions in stage one-predisposition are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Frequency distribution for answers in stage one – predisposition

(n=270)

Question #	SD	A	N	A	SA	Mean	Std.Dev.	Var
1	12	23	43	66	126	4.004	1.171	1.372
2	8	16	31	80	134	4.175	1.045	1.092
3	35	49	61	67	58	3.237	1.326	1.758
4	64	58	75	45	28	2.685	1.285	1.651
5	76	63	72	39	19	2.487	1.239	1.534
6	46	33	74	70	46	3.138	1.319	1.738
7	41	58	61	70	40	3.037	1.296	1.679
8	21	39	58	87	65	3.504	1.222	1.493
9	20	29	69	105	47	3.481	1.123	1.262
10	34	52	95	69	20	2.959	1.119	1.251

As shown in the above table, only two questions had mean scores of 4.0 or higher in stage one – predisposition. These questions include: question 1 – I always knew I would attend college had a mean score of 4.004 and question 2 – I have always thought that I am academically capable of attending college had a mean score of 4.175.

Sub-research question 1a.

By gender, what are the major factors influencing students in the predisposition stage?

Table 3 below depicts the top three questions broken down by gender in the predisposition stage. For simplicity, the researcher selected the top three questions of the ten questions in the predisposition stage for illustration in this chapter.

Table 3

Top three questions by gender in the predisposition stage

(n=269)

Question # 1 - I always knew I would attend college

	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
Male	4	7	19	24	61	115
	3.5%	6.1%	16.5%	20.9%	53.0%	42.8%
Female	8	16	24	42	64	154
	5.2%	10.4%	15.6%	27.3%	41.6%	57.2%

Question # 2 – I have always thought that I am academically capable of attending college.

Male	2	4	13	28	68	115
	1.7%	3.5%	11.3%	24.3%	59.1%	42.9%
Female	6	12	18	52	65	153
	3.9%	7.8%	11.8%	34.0%	42.5%	57.1%

Question #9 – People other than my family influenced my decision to attend college.

Male	7	15	26	47	20	115
	6.1%	13.0%	22.6%	40.9%	17.4%	42.8%
Female	13	14	43	57	27	154
	8.4%	9.1%	27.9%	37.0%	17.5%	57.2%

Questions # 1 and # 2 had more survey participants rate this question "strongly agree" than question # 9 where the greatest percentage of respondents selected "agree."

The chi-square test was used to test the hypothesis that there is no relationship between gender and variables in the predisposition stage. This test showed no significant difference at the .05 level except in question 6 – Knowledge of available financial aid influenced my decision to attend college (.01622).

The Spearman's rank correlation test was also used to measure the association between two variables that constitute rank orders in stage one - predisposition. Two questions - #8 – My family influenced my decision to attend college (.72590) and # 9 – People other than my family influenced my decision to attend college (.75285) were large and positive indicating a relationship between the characteristics.

Sub-research question 1b.

By age, what are the major factors influencing students in the predisposition stage?

Table 4 following depicts the top four questions (questions #8 and #9 had the same number of responses in the agree and strongly agree areas) broken down by age in the predisposition stage.

Table 4

Top four questions by age in the predisposition stage

(n=258)

Question # 1 - I always knew I would attend college	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
≤24	4	11	23	41	87	165
	1.8%	6.7%	13.9%	24.8%	52.7%	64.0%
25 +	9	11	16	22	35	93
	9.7%	11.8%	17.2%	23.7%	37.6%	36%
Question # 2 – I have always thought that I am academically capable of attending college.						
≤24	3	10	21	42	88	164
	1.8%	6.1%	12.8%	25.6%	53.7%	63.8%
25+	5	5	10	34	39	93
	5.4%	5.4%	10.8%	36.6%	41.9%	36.2%
Question #8 – My family influenced my decision to attend college.						
≤24	6	21	34	52	52	165
	3.6%	12.7%	20.6%	31.5%	31.5%	64.0%
25+	14	16	22	30	11	93
	15.1%	17.2%	23.7%	32.3%	11.8%	36.0%
Question # 9 – People other than my family influenced my decision to attend						
≤24	6	16	43	66	34	165
	3.6%	9.7%	26.1%	40.0%	20.6%	64%
25+	13	13	22	32	13	93
	6.8%	6.8%	23.4%	35.3%	16.9%	36.0%

More survey participants rated questions #1 and #2 "strongly agree" than in questions #8 and #9 where participants answered "agree" more often.

A chi-square test for relationship between gender and the questions in the predisposition stage showed no significant difference at the .05 level except in question #1 – I always knew I would attend college (.01091), question 4 – The curriculum in my high school influenced my decision to attend college (.01472), question #7 – Most of my friends are attending college (.0000), question #8 – My family influenced my decision to attend college (.00039), question #9 - People other than my family influenced my decision to attend college (.01999) and question #10 – My friends influenced my decision to attend college (.01962).

The Spearman's rank correlation test found no relationships between age and the predisposition characteristics.

Sub-research question 1c.

By distance from hometown, what are the major factors influencing students in the predisposition stage?

Table 5 on the following page depicts the top three questions broken down by distance from hometown in the predisposition stage.

Table 5

Top three questions by distance from hometown in the predisposition stage

(n=267)

Question # 1 - I always knew I would attend college

	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
0-30 miles	10	18	33	47	95	203
	4.9%	8.9%	16.3%	23.2%	46.8%	76.0%
31+ miles	2	5	9	18	30	64
	3.1%	7.8%	14.1%	28.1%	46.9%	24.0%

Question # 2 – I have always thought that I am academically capable of attending college.

0-30 miles	7	12	23	58	103	203
	3.4%	5.9%	11.3%	28.6%	50.7%	76.3%
31+ miles	1	4	8	21	29	63
	1.6%	6.3%	12.7%	33.3%	46.0%	53.7%

Question #9 – People other than my family influenced my decision to attend college.

0-30 miles	16	22	53	77	35	203
	7.9%	10.8%	26.1%	37.9%	17.2%	76.0%
31+ miles	4	7	14	28	11	64
	6.3%	10.9%	21.9%	43.8%	17.2%	24.0%

Participants answered “strongly agree” more often in questions #1 and #2 than in question # 9.

A chi-square test for relationship between distance from hometown and the questions in the predisposition stage showed no significant difference at the .05 level except in question # 7 – Most of my friends are attending college (.01596).

The Spearman's rank correlation test was used to describe the association between characteristics. Several questions had values that were large and positive indicating a relationship between the characteristics. These questions were: question #1 – I always knew I would attend college (.69934), question #2 – I have always thought that I am academically capable of attending college (.66943), question #4 – The curriculum in my high school influenced my decision to attend college (.95682), question #5 – My involvement in high school activities influenced my decision to attend college (.91150), question #6 – Knowledge of available financial aid influenced my decision to attend college (.66601), question # 8 – My family influenced my decision to attend college (.84998) and question # 10 – My friends influenced my decision to attend college (.69932).

Sub-research question 1d.

By number of college credits completed, what are the major factors influencing students in the predisposition stage?

Table 6 on the following page depicts the top three questions broken down by number of college credits completed in the predisposition stage.

Table 6

Top three questions by number of college credits completed in the predisposition stage

(n=265)

Question # 1 - I always knew I would attend college

	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
0-24 credits	9	11	28	43	62	153
	5.9%	7.2%	18.3%	28.1%	40.5%	57.7%
25+ credits	3	11	15	22	61	112
	2.7%	9.8%	13.4%	19.6%	54.5%	42.3%

Question # 2 – I have always thought that I am academically capable of attending college.

0-24 credits	6	8	21	52	66	153
	3.9%	5.2%	13.7%	34.0%	43.1%	58.0%
25+ credits	2	8	8	28	65	111
	3.4%	6.7%	12.2%	33.6%	55.1%	42.0%

Question #8 – My family influenced my decision to attend college.

0-24 credits	14	22	28	48	41	153
	9.2%	14.4%	18.3%	31.4%	26.8%	57.7%
25+ credits	7	15	28	39	23	112
	6.3%	13.4%	25.0%	34.8%	20.5%	42.3%

A chi-square test for relationship between the number of college credits completed by the survey participants and the questions in the predisposition stage showed no significant difference at the .05 level.

The Spearman's rank correlation test was also used to describe the relationships between characteristics in stage one - predisposition. Two questions: #7 – Most of my friends are attending college (.64811) and # 8 – My family influenced my decision to attend college (.65851) had values that were large and positive indicating association.

Sub-research question 1e.

By ethnic background, what are the major factors influencing students in the predisposition stage?

Table 7 below depicts the top four (questions # 8 and #9 had the same number of responses in the "agree" and "strongly agree" areas) questions broken down by ethnic background in the predisposition stage.

Table 7

Top four questions by ethnic background in the predisposition stage

(n=264)

Question # 1 - I always knew I would attend college

	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
Caucasian	12 6.1%	18 9.1%	26 13.1%	48 24.2%	94 47.5%	198 74.7%
African American	0 0%	0 0%	3 42.9%	1 14.3%	3 42.9%	7 2.6%
Hispanic	0 0%	0 0%	2 33.3%	3 50.0%	1 16.7%	6 2.3%
Asian	0 0%	1 25.0%	0 0%	2 50.0%	1 25.0%	4 1.5%
American Indian	0 0%	2 4.3%	11 23.9%	10 21.7%	23 50.0%	46 17.4%
Other	0 0%	2 50.0%	0 0%	0 0%	2 50.0%	4 1.5%

(Table continues)

Question # 2 – I have always thought that I am academically capable of attending college.

	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
Cauc-. asian	7 3.5%	13 6.6%	17 8.6%	55 27.8%	106 53.5%	198 75.0%
African American	0 0%	0 0%	2 28.6%	4 57.1%	1 14.3%	7 2.7%
Hispanic	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	2 33.3%	4 66.7%	6 2.3%
Asian	0 0%	0 0%	1 25.0%	3 75.0%	0 0%	4 1.5%
American Indian	1 2.2%	2 4.4%	8 17.8%	13 28.9%	21 46.7%	45 17.4%
Other	0 0%	1 25.0%	2 50.0%	1 25. 0%	0 0%	4 1.5%

Question #8 – My family influenced my decision to attend college.

Cauc-. asian	19 9.6%	27 13.6%	41 20.7%	63 31.8%	48 24.2%	198 74.7%
African American	1 14.3%	0 0%	2 28.6%	3 42.9%	1 14.3%	7 2.6%
Hispanic	0 0%	1 16.7%	2 33.3%	3 50.0%	0 0%	6 2.3%
Asian	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	3 75.0%	1 25.0%	4 1.5%
American Indian	0 0%	10 21.7%	11 23.9%	12 26.1%	13 28.3%	46 17.4%
Other	1 25.0%	0 0%	1 25.0%	2 50.0%	0 0%	4 1.5%

(Table continues)

Question # 9 – People other than my family influenced my decision to attend

	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
Caucasian	14 7.1%	21 10.6%	55 27.8%	72 36.4%	36 18.2%	198 74.7%
African American	1 14.3%	0 0%	3 42.9%	3 42.9%	0 0%	7 2.6%
Hispanic	1 16.7%	0 0%	1 16.7%	3 50.0%	1 16.7%	6 2.3%
Asian	0 0%	0 0%	1 25.0%	3 75.0%	0 0%	4 1.5%
American Indian	4 8.7%	8 17.4%	6 13.0%	19 41.3%	9 19.6%	46 17.4%
Other	0 0%	0 0%	1 25.0%	2 50.0%	1 25.0%	4 1.5%

A chi-square test for relationship between the ethnic background of the survey participants and the questions in the predisposition stage showed no significant difference at the .05 level.

The Spearman's rank correlation test was also used to describe the relationships between characteristics in stage one - predisposition. Seven questions: #1 – I always know I would attend college (.97488), #3 – Living close to a higher education institution influenced my decision to attend college (.71801), #4 – The curriculum in my high school influenced my decision to attend college (.62867), #5 – My involvement in high school activities influenced my decision to attend college (.62439), #8 – My family influenced my decision to attend college (.81212), #9 – People other than my family influenced my decision to attend college (.74358) and #10 – My friends influenced my decision to attend college (.94651) had answers that were large and positive indicating association between the variables.

Sub-research question 1f.

By parental college experience, what are the major factors influencing students in the predisposition stage?

Table 8 below depicts the top three questions broken down by parental college experience in the predisposition stage. For clarification, yes indicates parental college experience, no indicates parents did not have college experience.

Table 8

Top three questions by parental college experience in the predisposition stage

(n=268)

Question # 1 - I always knew I would attend college

	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
Yes	3	10	20	33	77	143
	2.1%	7.0%	14.0%	23.1%	53.8%	53.4%
No	9	13	23	32	48	125
	7.2%	10.4%	18.4%	25.6%	38.4%	46.6%

Question # 2 – I have always thought that I am academically capable of attending college.

Yes	2	4	13	42	81	142
	1.4%	2.8%	9.2%	29.6%	57.0%	53.2%
No	6	12	17	38	52	125
	4.8%	9.6%	13.6%	30.4%	41.6%	46.8%

Question #8 – My family influenced my decision to attend college.

	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
Yes	6	12	31	50	44	143
	4.2%	8.4%	21.7%	35.0%	30.8%	53.4%
No	15	27	25	37	21	125
	12.0%	21.6%	20.0%	29.6%	16.8%	46.6%

Participants answered “strongly agree” more often in questions #1 and #2 than in question # 8.

A chi-square test for relationship between parental college experience of the survey participants and the questions in the predisposition stage showed no significant difference at the .05 level with the exception of questions #2 – I have always thought that I am academically capable of attending college (.01718), question #5 – My involvement in high school activities influenced my decision to attend college (.00187) and question #8 – My family influenced my decision to attend college (.00071).

The Spearman’s rank correlation test was used to describe the association between characteristics. Two questions had values that were large and positive indicating a relationship between the characteristics. These questions were: #6 – Knowledge of available financial aid influenced my decision to attend college (.78714) and #9 – People other than my family influenced my decision to attend college (.71571).

Research question 2.

What information influences a student to consider Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College? (Stage two-search).

Data to answer this question was taken from survey questions number 11 – 34 addressing factors in the search stage. For review, these influences are listed below:

11. College reputation
12. College academic quality

13. Faculty expertise
14. Campus atmosphere
15. Campus location
16. College cultural uniqueness
17. Academic programs
18. Hospitality/friendliness
19. Social activities
20. Campus safety
21. Campus size
22. Educational facilities
23. Employment opportunities after graduation
24. Class size
25. Cost
26. Availability of financial aid
27. Advice of family members
28. Advice of friends
29. Advice of teachers or guidance counselors
30. College published materials
31. College web site
32. College advertising (i.e. television, newspaper, radio)
33. College representatives
34. Campus visit

Table 9 below details the answers to these questions regarding Stage two – search.

Table 9

Frequency distribution for answers in stage two – search

N=270

Question #	SD	A	N	A	SA	Mean	Std.Dev.	Var
11	17	22	89	100	42	3.474	1.051	1.105
12	11	17	92	107	43	3.570	.968	.937
13	13	18	112	94	32	3.424	.954	.909
14	10	8	67	103	82	3.885	.997	.994
15	6	15	40	84	125	4.137	1.009	1.018
16	21	24	96	70	58	3.446	1.153	1.330
17	8	12	63	116	70	3.848	.960	.921
18	9	6	65	107	83	3.922	.967	.934
19	21	31	126	58	33	3.190	1.050	1.102
20	18	21	111	77	43	3.393	1.057	1.117
21	13	15	57	93	92	3.874	1.094	1.196
22	10	10	93	108	48	3.647	.941	.886
23	8	16	77	91	78	3.796	1.020	1.040
24	11	10	56	104	89	3.926	1.025	1.050
25	4	14	47	90	113	4.097	.967	.934
26	22	22	69	71	85	3.651	1.233	1.519
27	24	39	80	89	38	3.289	1.146	1.314
28	27	37	91	92	23	3.174	1.092	1.193
29	23	37	107	74	29	3.181	1.074	1.153
30	23	45	122	62	18	3.026	1.003	1.007
31	46	55	125	35	8	2.643	1.007	1.014
32	32	43	125	56	14	2.915	1.022	1.045
33	32	43	120	55	20	2.956	1.066	1.136
34	25	25	90	76	54	3.404	1.178	1.387

The previous table shows that two factors - #15 – Campus location and # 25 - cost had mean scores above 4.0 in stage two – search. Question 15 had a mean score of 4.137 and question 25 had a mean score of 4.097.

Sub-research question 2a.

By gender, what are the major factors influencing students in the search stage?

Table 10 below depicts the top five questions broken down by gender from hometown in the search stage. Five questions are depicted in the following charts due to the large number (24) of characteristics listed in the survey.

Table 10

Top five questions by gender in the search stage

Question # 15 – Campus location (n=269)						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
Male	5 4.3%	8 7.0%	17 14.8%	38 33.0%	47 40.9%	115 42.8%
Female	1 .6%	7 4.5%	23 14.9%	45 29.2%	78 50.6%	154 57.2%
Question # 17 – Academic program (n=268)						
Male	3 4.4%	8 7.0%	30 26.3%	39 34.2%	32 28.1%	114 42.5%
Female	3 1.9%	4 2.6%	33 21.4%	76 49.4%	38 24.7%	154 57.5%
Question # 18 – Hospitality/friendliness (n=269)						
Male	5 4.3%	3 2.6%	39 33.9%	44 38.3%	24 20.9%	115 42.8%
Female	4 2.6%	3 1.9%	26 16.9%	62 40.3%	59 38.3%	154 57.2%

(Table continues)

Question # 24 - Class size (n=269)

	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
Male	7	7	28	48	25	115
	4.3%	2.6%	33.9%	38.3%	20.9%	42.8%
Female	4	3	28	55	64	154
	2.6%	1.9%	18.2%	35.7%	41.6%	57.2%

Question # 25 – Cost (n=267)

Male	2	8	23	40	42	115
	1.7%	7.0%	20.0%	34.8%	36.5%	43.1%
Female	2	6	24	49	71	152
	1.3%	3.9%	15.8%	32.2%	46.7%	56.9%

A chi-square test for relationship between gender of the survey participants and the twenty-four (24) questions in the search stage showed no significant difference at the .05 level with the exception of questions #1 – College reputation (.01842), #14 – Campus atmosphere (.04188), #16 – College cultural uniqueness (.00001). #18 – Hospitality/friendliness (.00432), #20 – Campus safety (.00247), #21 – Campus size (.00008), #22 – Educational facilities (.03834), #24 – Class size (.00552) and #32 – College advertising (.04592).

The Spearman's rank correlation test was used to measure the association between two variables that constitute rank orders. One question had a value that was large and positive indicating a relationship between the characteristics. This question was: #33 – College representatives (.60304).

Sub-research question 2b.

By age, what are the major factors influencing students in the search stage?

Table 11 below depicts the top six questions (questions #14 and #17 had the same number of responses in the "agree" and "strongly agree" areas) organized by age grouping in the search stage.

Table 11

Top five questions by age in the search stage

Question # 14 – Campus atmosphere (n=258)

	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
≤24	6 3.6%	6 3.6%	37 22.4%	65 39.4%	51 30.9%	165 64.0%
25+	3 3.2%	2 2.2%	27 29.0%	33 35.5%	28 30.1%	93 36.0%
Question # 15 – Campus location (n=258)						
≤24	3 1.8%	11 6.7%	25 15.2%	48 29.1%	78 47.3%	165 64.0%
25+	3 3.2%	2 2.2%	14 15.1%	31 33.3%	43 46.2%	93 36.0%
Question # 17 – Academic programs (n=257)						
≤24	5 3.0%	11 6.7%	41 25.0%	66 40.2%	41 25.0%	164 63.8%
25+	3 3.2%	1 1.1%	19 20.4%	44 47.3%	26 28.0%	93 36.2%
Question # 18 – Hospitality/friendliness (n=258)						
≤24	6 3.6%	5 3.0%	37 22.4%	70 42.4%	47 28.5%	165 64.0%
25+	3 3.2%	1 1.1%	24 25.8%	33 35.5%	32 34.4%	93 36.0%

(Table continues)

Question # 24 – Class size (n=258)

	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
≤24	8	6	34	67	50	165
	4.8%	3.6%	20.6%	40.6%	30.3%	64.0%
25+	3	4	19	32	35	93
	3.2%	4.3%	20.4%	34.4%	37.6%	36.0%

Question # 25 – Cost (n=256)

≤24	1	11	27	50	75	164
	.6%	6.7%	16.5%	30.5%	45.7%	64.1%
25+	2	3	19	35	33	92
	2.2%	3.3%	20.7%	38.0%	35.9%	35.9%

A chi-square test for relationship between age grouping of the survey participants and the twenty-four (24) questions in the search stage showed no significant difference at the .05 level with the exception of questions # 27 – Advice of family members (.03470) and #28 – Advice of friends (.00656).

The Spearman's rank correlation test was used to describe the relationship between characteristics. Several questions had answers that were large and positive indicating an association between the characteristics. These question were: #13 – Faculty expertise (.86681), #14 - Campus atmosphere (.67927), #15 - Campus location (.86535), #16 – College cultural uniqueness (.88069), #20 – Campus safety (.79201), #21 – Campus size (.96308), #22 – Educational facilities (.97339), #23 – Employment opportunities after graduation (.85689), #26 – Availability of financial aid (.60991), #33 – College representatives (.79311) and #34 – Campus visit (.73584).

Sub-research question 2c.

By distance from hometown, what are the major factors influencing students in the search stage?

Table 12 below depicts the top five questions organized by distance from hometown in the search stage.

Table 12

Top five questions by distance from hometown in the search stage

Question # 15 –.Campus location (n=267)						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
0-30 miles	4	7	31	66	95	203
	2.0%	3.4%	15.3%	32.5%	46.8%	76.0%
31+ miles	2	8	9	16	29	64
	3.1%	12.5%	14.1%	25.0%	45.3%	24.0%
Question # 17 – Academic programs (n=266)						
0-30 miles	6	10	53	88	45	202
	3.0%	5.0%	26.2%	43.6%	22.3%	75.9%
31+ miles	2	2	10	26	24	64
	3.1%	3.1%	15.6%	40.6%	37.5%	24.1%
Question # 18 – Hospitality/friendliness (n=267)						
0-30 miles	7	5	57	76	58	203
	3.4%	2.5%	28.1%	37.4%	28.6%	76.0%
31+ miles	2	1	7	30	24	64
	3.1%	1.6%	10.9%	46.9%	37.5%	24.0%

(Table continues)

Question # 24 – Class size (n=267)

	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
0-30 miles	9	10	44	69	71	203
	4.4%	4.9%	21.7%	34.0%	35.0%	76.0%
31+ miles	2	0	11	34	17	64
	3.1%	0%	17.2%	53.1%	26.6%	24.0%

Question # 25 - Cost (n=265)

0-30 miles	2	11	34	63	92	202
	1.0%	5.4%	16.8%	31.2%	45.5%	76.2%
31+ miles	2	3	12	26	20	63
	3.2%	4.8%	19.0%	41.3%	31.7%	23.8%

A chi-square test for relationship between distance from hometown of the survey participants and the twenty-four (24) questions in the search stage showed no significant difference at the .05 level with the exception of question #24 – Class size (.04987).

The Spearman's rank correlation test indicated that several questions had scores that were large and positive. These questions were: #11 – College reputation (.78112), #19 – Social activities (.81150), #22 – Educational facilities (.91312), #24 – Class size (.80480), #26 – Availability of financial aid (.95608), #30 0 College published materials (.66181) and #32 – College advertising (.79327).

Sub-research question 2d.

By number of college credits completed, what are the major factors influencing students in the search stage?

Table 13 below depicts the top six questions (questions # 14 and # 17 had the same number of responses in the "agree" and "strongly agree" areas) organized by number of college credits completed in the search stage.

Table 13

Top six questions by number of college credits completed in the search stage

Question # 14 – Campus atmosphere (n=265)

	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
0-24 credits	6 3.9%	7 4.6%	36 23.5%	63 41.2%	41 26.8%	153 57.7%
25+ credits	4 3.6%	1 .9%	30 26.8%	36 32.1%	41 36.6%	112 42.3%
Question # 15 – Campus location (n=265)						
0-24 credits	3 3.9%	9 5.2%	26 13.7%	49 34.0%	66 43.1%	153 57.7%
25+ credits	3 2.7%	6 5.4%	14 12.5%	30 26.8%	59 52.7%	112 42.3%
Question # 17 – Academic programs (n=264)						
0-24 credits	5 3.3%	8 5.3%	38 25.0%	68 44.7%	33 21.7%	152 57.6%
25+ credits	3 2.7%	4 3.6%	25 22.3%	43 38.4%	37 33.0%	112 42.4%
Question # 18 – Hospitality/friendliness (n=265)						
0-24 credits	4 2.6%	3 2.0%	39 25.5%	60 39.2%	47 30.7%	153 57.7%
25+ credits	5 4.5%	3 2.7 %	25 22.3%	44 39.3%	35 31.3%	112 42.3%

(Table continues)

Question # 24 – Class size (n=265)

	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
0-24 credits	5 3.3%	7 4.6%	34 22.2%	62 40.5%	45 29.4%	153 57.7%
25+ credits	6 5.4%	3 2.7%	20 17.9%	39 34.8%	44 39.3%	112 42.3%

Question # 25 – Cost (n=264)

0-24 credits	2 1.3%	7 4.6%	32 20.9%	50 32.7%	62 40.5%	153 58.0%
25+ credits	2 1.8%	7 6.3%	13 11.7%	39 35.1%	50 45.0%	111 42.0%

A chi-square test for relationship between the number of college credits completed by the survey participants and the questions in the search stage showed no significant difference at the .05 level.

The Spearman's rank correlation test was also used to describe the relationships between characteristics in stage two - search. There were six questions that had answers that were large and positive indicating association. These questions were: # 18 – Hospitality/friendliness (.99659), #19 – Social activities (.84155), #20 – Campus safety (.77151), #26 – Availability of financial aid (.79462), #30 – College published materials (.85709) and # 34 – Campus visit (.65992).

Sub-research question 2e.

By ethnic background, what are the major factors influencing students in the search stage?

Table 14 following depicts the top five questions broken down by ethnic background in the search stage.

Table 14

Top five questions by ethnic background in the search stage

Question # 15 – Campus location (n=265)

	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
Caucasian	4	9	27	55	103	198
	2.0%	4.5%	13.6%	27.8%	52.0%	74.7%
African American	0	1	3	2	1	7
	0%	14.3%	42.9%	28.6%	14.3%	2.6%
Hispanic	1	1	0	2	2	6
	16.7%	16.7%	0%	33.3%	33.3%	2.3%
Asian	0	0	1	2	1	4
	0%	0%	25.0%	50.0%	25.0%	1.5%
American Indian	0	4	7	19	16	46
	0%	8.7%	15.2%	41.3%	34.8%	17.4%
Other	1	0	0	1	2	4
	25.0%	0%	0%	25.0%	50.0%	1.5%

Question # 18 – Hospitality/friendliness (n=265).

Caucasian	8	4	52	74	60	198
	4.0%	2.0%	26.3%	37.4%	30.3%	74.7%
African American	0	0	1	2	4	7
	0%	0%	14.3%	28.6%	57.1%	2.6%
Hispanic	0	0	1	3	2	6
	0%	0%	16.7%	50.0%	33.3%	2.3%
Asian	0	0	2	1	1	4
	0%	0%	50.0%	25.0%	25.0%	1.5%
American Indian	1	2	8	23	12	46
	2.2%	4.3%	17.4%	50.0%	26.1%	17.4%
Other	0	0	0	2	2	4
	0%	0%	0%	50. 0%	50.0%	1.5%

(Table continues)

Question # 21 – Campus size (n=265)

	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
Caucasian	10	12	41	68	67	198
	5.1%	6.1%	20.7%	34.3%	33.8%	74.7%
African American	0	0	2	2	3	7
	14.3%	0%	28.6%	28.6%	42.9%	2.6%
Hispanic	0	0	1	3	2	6
	0%	0%	16.7%	50.0%	33.3%	2.3%
Asian	0	1	1	1	1	4
	0%	25.0%	25. 0%	25.0%	25.0%	1.5%
American Indian	2	2	10	16	16	46
	4.3%	4.3 %	21.7%	34.8%	34.8%	17.4%
Other	1	0	0	1	2	4
	25.0%	0%	0%	25.0%	50.0%	1.5%
Question # 24 – Class size (n=265)						
Caucasian	11	9	41	72	65	198
	5.6%	4.5%	20.7%	36.4%	32.8%	74.7%
African American	0	0	1	4	2	7
	0%	0%	14.3%	57.1%	28.6%	2.6%
Hispanic	0	0	0	4	2	6
	0%	0%	0%	66.7%	33.3%	2.3%
Asian	0	0	1	2	1	4
	0%	0%	25.0%	50.0%	25.0%	1.5%
American Indian	0	1	11	18	16	46
	0%	2.2%	23.9%	39.1%	34.8%	17.4%
Other	0	0	0	2	2	4
	0%	0%	0%	50.0%	50.0%	1.5%
Question # 25 – Cost (n=263)						
Caucasian	3	9	32	62	91	197
	1.5%	4.6%	16.2%	31.5%	46.2%	74.9%
African American	0	0	1	4	2	7
	0%	0%	14.3%	57.1%	28.6%	2.7%
Hispanic	0	1	1	1	3	6
	0%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	50.0%	2.3%
Asian	0	0	1	2	1	4
	0%	0%	25.0%	50.0%	25.0%	1.5%
American Indian	0	4	11	18	13	46
	0%	8.7%	23.9%	39.1%	28.3%	17.5%

(Table continues)

	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
Other	1	0	0	0	2	3
	33.3%	0%	0%	0%	66.7%	1.1%

A chi-square test for relationship between the ethnic background of the survey participants and the questions in the search stage showed no significant difference at the .05 level with the exception of four questions. These questions were: #15 – Campus location (.03224), #16 – College cultural uniqueness (.00000), #25 – Cost (.02681) and # 31 – College web site (.04389).

The Spearman's rank correlation test was also used to describe the relationships between characteristics in stage two - search. There were six questions with values that were large and positive indicating association. These questions were: # 12 – Academic quality (.66056), # 14 – Campus atmosphere (.87197), # 17 – Academic programs (.70799), #24 – Campus size (.70846), #28 – Advice of friends (.89997) and #29 – Advice of teachers or guidance counselors (.60554).

Sub-research question 2f.

By parental college experience, what are the major factors influencing students in the search stage?

Table 15 on the following page depicts the top three questions broken down by parental college experience in the search stage. For clarification, yes indicates parental college experience, no indicates parents did not have college experience.

Table 15

Top five questions by parental college experience in the search stage

	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
Question # 15 - Campus location (n=268)						
Yes	2	11	25	43	62	143
	1.4%	7.7%	17.5%	30.1%	43.4%	53.4%
No	4	4	15	39	63	125
	3.2%	3.2%	12.0%	31.2%	50.4%	46.6%
Question # 17 – Academic Programs (n=267)						
Yes	5	7	31	63	36	142
	3.5%	4.9%	21.8%	44.4%	25.4%	53.2%
No	3	5	32	51	34	125
	2.4%	4.0%	25.6%	40.8%	27.2%	46.8%
Question # 18 – Hospitality/friendliness (n=268)						
Yes	7	2	32	62	40	143
	4.9%	1.4%	22.4%	43.4%	28.0%	53.4%
No	2	4	32	44	43	125
	1.6%	3.2%	25.6%	35.2%	34.4%	46.6%
Question # 24 – Class size (n=268)						
Yes	8	5	33	57	40	143
	5.6%	3.5%	23.1%	39.9%	28.0%	53.4%
No	3	5	22	46	49	125
	2.4%	4.0%	17.6%	36.8 %	39.2%	46.6%
Question # 25 - Cost (n=267)						
Yes	1	9	23	52	58	143
	.7%	6.3%	16.1%	36.4%	40.6%	53.6%
No	3	5	23	38	55	124
	2.4%	4.0%	18.5%	30.6%	44.4%	46.4%

A chi-square test for relationship between parental college experience of the survey participants and the questions in the search stage showed no significant difference at the .05 level with the exception of questions # 23 – Employment opportunities after graduation (.02414) and #28 – Advice of friends (.04435).

The Spearman's rank correlation test was used to describe the relationship between characteristics. Six questions had answers that were large and positive indicating a relationship between the variables. These questions were: # 14 – Campus atmosphere (.79199), # 17 – Academic programs (.90583), #22 – Educational facilities (.89636), # 25 – Cost (.77470), #29 – Advice of teachers or guidance counselors (.88066) and # 30 – College published materials (.99334).

Research question 3.

What are the major influences that students consider when choosing to attend Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College? (Stage three – choice). Data to answer this question was taken from survey questions number 35 - 58 addressing factors in the choice stage. For review, these influences are listed below:

35. Campus atmosphere
36. College academic quality
37. Campus safety
38. College reputation
39. Campus location

40. College cultural uniqueness
41. Academic programs
42. College representatives
43. Campus visit
44. Social activities
45. Faculty expertise
46. College Web site
47. Advice of friends
48. Employment opportunities after graduation
49. Class size
50. Education facilities
51. Availability of financial aid
52. Advice of family members
53. Cost
54. Advice of teachers or guidance counselors
55. College published materials
56. Campus size
57. College advertising (i.e. television, newspaper, radio)
58. Hospitality/friendliness

Table 16 on the following page details the answers to these questions regarding Stage three – choice.

Table 16

Frequency distribution for answers in stage three – choice

N=270

Question #	SD	A	N	A	SA	Mean	Std.Dev.	Var
35	13	21	69	89	76	3.724	1.104	1.219
36	14	16	83	110	45	3.582	1.008	1.016
37	21	21	113	72	41	3.340	1.078	1.161
38	15	19	98	88	47	3.498	1.042	1.086
39	11	14	39	72	131	4.116	1.099	1.208
40	24	24	95	62	62	3.427	1.197	1.434
41	9	13	69	91	86	3.866	1.030	1.061
42	22	33	110	70	33	3.220	1.078	1.161
43	25	32	89	71	50	3.333	1.185	1.404
44	35	39	130	41	22	2.910	1.072	1.150
45	18	21	107	79	42	3.397	1.058	1.120
46	47	47	124	33	15	2.707	1.073	1.151
47	32	35	100	69	31	3.120	1.151	1.324
48	17	27	75	85	64	3.567	1.145	1.310
49	11	20	62	84	91	3.836	1.103	1.216
50	16	23	94	84	51	3.489	1.079	1.165
51	29	26	76	72	65	3.440	1.257	1.581
52	27	37	83	70	50	3.296	1.213	1.472
53	8	19	61	70	109	3.948	1.092	1.193
54	25	29	103	70	41	3.272	1.134	1.285
55	24	36	125	57	25	3.086	1.039	1.079
56	19	19	63	83	84	3.724	1.183	1.399
57	32	33	120	60	23	3.034	1.082	1.171
58	16	13	62	96	81	3.795	1.108	1.227

Table 3 shows that only one factor - # 39, campus location, had a mean score of 4.0 or higher in stage three – choice. Question #39 had a mean score of 4.116.

Sub-research question 3a.

By gender, what are the major factors influencing students in the choice stage?

Table 17 below depicts the top five questions broken down by gender from hometown in the choice stage. Five questions are depicted in the following charts due to the large number (24) of characteristics listed in the survey.

Table 17

Top five questions by gender in the choice stage

Question # 39 – Campus location (n=266)

	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
Male	10	9	16	37	43	115
	8.7%	7.8%	13.9%	32.2%	37.4%	43.2%
Female	1	5	23	34	88	151
	.7%	3.3%	15.2%	22.5%	58.3%	56.8%

Question # 41 – Academic programs (n=267)

	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
Male	4	7	31	33	40	115
	3.5%	6.1%	27.0%	28.7%	34.8%	43.1%
Female	5	6	38	57	46	152
	3.3%	3.9%	25.0%	37.5%	30.3%	56.9%

Question # 49 – Class size (n=267)

	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
Male	8	13	35	33	26	115
	7.0%	11.3%	30.4%	28.7%	22.6%	43.1%
Female	3	7	27	50	65	152
	2.0%	4.6%	17.8%	32.9%	42.8%	56.9%

Question # 53 - Cost (n=266)

	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
Male	6	13	29	27	39	114
	5.3%	11.4%	25.4%	23.7%	34.2%	42.9%
Female	2	6	32	42	70	152
	1.3%	3.9%	21.1%	27.6%	46.1%	57.1%

(Table continues)

Question # 58 – Hospitality/friendliness (n=267)

	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
Male	11	8	40	34	22	115
	9.6%	7.0%	34.8%	29.6%	19.1%	43.1%
Female	5	5	21	62	59	152
	3.3%	3.3%	13.8%	40.8%	38.8%	56.9%

A chi-square test for relationship between gender of the survey participants and the twenty-four (24) questions in the choice stage showed no significant difference at the .05 level with the exception of several questions. These twelve questions include: # 35 – Campus atmosphere (.00001), # 36 – College academic quality (.00039), # 37 – Campus safety (.00000), # 38 – College reputation (.02387), # 39 – Campus location (.00034), # 40 – College cultural uniqueness (.00005), # 43 – Campus visit (.00068), # 49 – Class size (.00039), # 51 – Availability of financial aid (.01319), # 53 – Cost (.02048), # 56 – Campus size (.00035) and # 58 – Hospitality/friendliness (.00001).

The Spearman's rank correlation test was used to measure the association between two variables that constitute rank orders. Three questions had values that were large and positive indicating a relationship between the characteristics. These questions were: # 41 – Academic program (.96465), #46 – College web site (.97951) and #48 – Employment opportunities after graduation (.86670).

Sub-research question 3b.

By age, what are the major factors influencing students in the choice stage?

Table 18 below depicts the top five questions (questions #14 and #17 had the same number of responses in the "agree" and "strongly agree" areas) organized by age grouping in the choice stage.

Table 18

Top five questions by age in the choice stage

Question # 39 – Campus location (n=255)	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
≤24	7	13	24	42	77	163
	4.3%	8.0%	14.7%	25.8%	47.2%	63.9%
25+	3	1	13	24	51	92
	3.3%	1.1%	14.1%	26.1%	55.4%	36.1%
Question # 49 – Class size (n=256)						
≤24	8	12	33	55	55	163
	4.9%	7.4%	20.2%	33.7%	33.7%	63.7%
25+	3	8	24	25	33	93
	3.2%	8.6%	25.8%	26.9%	35.5%	36.3%
Question # 53 - Cost (n=255)						
≤24	4	11	32	42	74	163
	2.5%	6.7%	19.6%	25.8%	45.4%	63.9%
25+	3	7	26	26	30	92
	3.3%	7.6%	28.3%	28.3%	32.6%	36.1%
Question # 56 – Campus size (n=256)						
≤24	9	13	35	53	53	163
	5.5%	8.0%	21.5%	32.5%	32.5%	63.7%
25+	8	6	24	26	29	93
	8.6%	6.5%	25.8%	28.0%	31.2%	36.3%

(Table continues)

Question # 59 – Hospitality/friendliness (n=256)

	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
<24	7 4.3%	10 6.1%	40 24.5%	64 39.3%	42 25.8%	163 63.7%
25+	6 6.5%	3 3.2%	18 19.4%	29 31.2%	37 39.8%	93 36.3%

A chi-square test for relationship between age grouping of the survey participants and the twenty-four (24) questions in the choice stage showed no significant difference at the .05 level with the exception of questions # 41 Academic programs (.02738), # 44 – Social activities (.02124) and # 46 – College web site (.03164).

The Spearman's rank correlation test was used to describe the relationship between characteristics. Two questions had scores that were large and positive indicating a relationship between the characteristics. These questions were: # 49 – Class size (.86148) and #55 – College published materials (.77209).

Sub-research question 3c.

By distance from hometown, what are the major factors influencing students in the choice stage?

Table 19 below depicts the top five questions organized by distance from hometown in the choice stage.

Table 19

Top five questions by distance from hometown in the choice stage

Question # 39 –.Campus location (n=264)						
	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
0-30 miles	8	7	28	50	110	203
	3.9%	3.4%	13.8%	24.6%	54.2%	76.9%
31+ miles	3	7	11	20	20	61
	4.9%	11.5%	18.0%	32.8%	32.8%	23.1%
Question # 41 – Academic programs (n=265)						
0-30 miles	6	10	55	70	62	203
	3.0%	4.9%	27.1%	34.5%	30.5%	76.6%
31+ miles	2	3	14	20	23	62
	3.2%	4.8%	22.6%	32.3%	37.1%	23.4%
Question # 49 – Class size (n=265)						
0-30 miles	7	16	47	61	72	203
	3.4%	7.9%	23.2%	30.0%	35.5%	76.6%
31+ miles	4	4	14	23	17	62
	6.5%	6.5%	22.6%	37.1%	27.4%	23.4%
Question # 53 – Cost (n=264)						
0-30 miles	6	14	48	63	91	202
	3.0%	6.9%	23.8%	21.3%	45.0%	76.5%
31+ miles	2	4	13	26	17	62
	3.2%	6.5%	21.0%	41.9%	27.4%	23.5%
Question # 58 – Hospitality/friendliness (n=265)						
0-30 miles	13	9	47	72	62	203
	6.4%	4.4%	23.2%	35.5%	30.5%	76.6%
31+ miles	2	4	15	23	18	62
	3.2%	6.5%	24.2%	37.1%	29.0%	23.4%

A chi-square test for relationship between distance from hometown of the survey participants and the twenty-four (24) questions in the choice stage showed no significant difference at the .05 level with the exception of questions # 30 – Campus location (.01798) and # 53 – Cost (.02121).

The Spearman's rank correlation test indicated that several questions had scores that were large and positive. These questions were: # 35 – Campus atmosphere (.82888), #37 – Campus safety (.69273), # 38 – College reputation (.91999), # 48 – Employment opportunities after graduation (.68892), # 51 – Availability of financial aid (.63067), # 56 – Campus size (.93980) and # 58 – Hospitality/friendliness (.97400).

Sub-research question 3d.

By college credits completed, what are the major factors influencing students in the choice stage?

Table 20 below depicts the top five questions organized by number of college credits completed in the choice stage.

Table 20

Top five questions by number of college credits completed in the choice stage

Question # 39 – Campus location (n=263)

	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
0-24 credits	6	7	27	39	72	151
	4.0%	4.6%	17.9%	25.8%	47.7%	57.4%
25+ credits	5	7	12	29	59	112
	4.5%	6.3%	10.7%	25.9%	52.7%	42.6%

(Table continues)

Question # 41 – Academic programs (n=264)

	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
0-24 credits	4 2.6%	8 5.3%	48 31.6%	58 38.2%	34 22.4%	152 57.6%
25+ credits	4 3.6%	5 4.5%	21 18.8%	30 26.8%	52 46.4%	112 42.4%

Question # 49 – Class size (n=264)

0-24 credits	5 3.3%	11 7.2%	37 24.3%	49 32.2%	50 32.9%	152 57.6%
25+ credits	6 5.4%	9 8.0%	24 21.4%	33 29.5%	40 35.7%	112 42.4%

Question # 53 – Cost (n=263)

0-24 credits	2 1.3%	9 6.0%	38 25.2%	42 27.8%	60 39.7%	151 57.4%
25+ credits	6 5.4%	9 8.0 %	22 19.6%	26 23.2%	49 43.8%	112 42.6%

Question # 58 – Hospitality/friendliness (n=264)

0-24 credits	8 5.3%	4 2.6%	36 23.7%	65 42.8%	39 25.7%	152 57.6%
25+ credits	7 6.3%	9 8.0%	26 23.2%	29 25.9%	41 36.6%	112 42.4%

A chi-square test for relationship between the number of college credits completed by the survey participants and the questions in the choice stage showed no significant difference at the .05 level with the exception of the following questions: # 36 – Academic quality (.02034), # 37 – Campus safety (.03407), # 40 – College cultural awareness (.01243), # 41 – Academic programs (.00108), # 42 – College representatives (.01123), # 43 – Campus visit (.02231), # 45 – Faculty expertise (.00966), #52 – Advice from family members (.02611),

54 – Advice of teachers or guidance counselors (.02252), # 55 – College published materials (.03344) and # 58 – Hospitality/friendliness (.02018).

The Spearman's rank correlation test was also used to describe the relationships between characteristics in stage three - choice. There were five questions that had scores that were large and positive indicating linear association. These questions were: # 38 – College reputation (.97471), # 49 – Class size (.91482), # 50 – Educational facilities (.88798), # 53 – Cost (.97593) and # 58 – Hospitality/friendliness (.79462).

Sub-research question 3e.

By ethnic background, what are the major factors influencing students in the choice stage?

Table 21 below depicts the top five questions broken down by ethnic background in the choice stage.

Table 21

Top five questions by ethnic background in the choice stage

Question # 39 – Campus location (n=262)

	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
Caucasian	10 5.1%	11 5.6%	25 12.7%	46 23.4%	105 53.3%	197 75.2%
African American	0 0%	0 0%	2 28.6%	2 28.6%	3 42.9%	7 2.7%
Hispanic	1 16.7%	1 16.7%	0 0%	3 50.0%	1 16.7%	6 2.3%
Asian	0 0%	0 0%	2 50.0%	2 50.0%	0 0%	4 1.5%
American Indian	0 0%	2 4.3%	8 17.4%	17 37.0%	19 41.3%	46 17.6%

	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
Other	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	2 100.0%	2 1.5%

Question # 41 – Academic programs (n=263).

Caucasian	7 3.6%	12 6.1%	48 24.4%	65 33.0%	65 33.3%	197 74.9%
African American	0 0%	0 0%	1 14.3%	2 28.6%	4 57.1%	7 2.7%
Hispanic	0 0%	0 0%	2 33.3%	3 50.0%	1 16.7%	6 2.3%
Asian	0 0%	0 0%	4 100.0%	0 0%	0 0%	4 1.5%
American Indian	2 4.3%	1 2.2%	13 28.3%	16 34.8%	14 30.4%	46 17.5%
Other	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	2 66.7%	1 33.3%	3 1.5%

Question # 49 – Class size (n=263)

Caucasian	9 4.6%	16 8.1%	47 23.9%	60 30.5%	65 33.0%	197 74.9%
African American	0 0%	0 0%	1 14.3%	2 28.6%	4 57.1%	7 2.7%
Hispanic	1 16.7%	0 0%	0 0%	3 50.0%	2 33.3%	6 2.3%
Asian	0 0%	0 0%	2 50. 0%	2 50.0%	0 0%	4 1.5%
American Indian	0 0%	4 8.7 %	10 21.7%	14 30.4%	18 39.1%	46 17.5%
Other	1 33.3%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	2 66.7%	3 1.1%

Question # 53 - Cost (n=262)

Caucasian	5 2.5%	14 7.1%	39 19.8%	49 24.9%	90 45.7%	197 75.2%
African American	0 0%	0 0%	2 28.6%	3 42.9%	2 28.6%	7 2.7%
Hispanic	0 0%	0 0%	1 20.0%	2 40.0%	2 40.0%	5 1.9%

(Table continues)

	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
Asian	0 0%	1 25.0%	1 25.0%	2 50.0%	0 0%	4 1.5%
American Indian	2 4.3%	4 8.7%	16 34.8%	12 26.1%	12 26.1%	46 17.6%
Other	1 33.3%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	2 66.7%	3 1.1%

Question # 58 – Hospitality/friendliness (n=263)

Caucasian	12 6.1%	12 6.1%	47 23.9%	76 38.6%	50 25.4%	197 74.9%
African American	0 0%	0 0%	1 14.3%	1 14.3%	5 71.4%	7 2.7%
Hispanic	1 16.7%	0 0%	1 16.7%	2 33.3%	2 33.3%	6 2.3%
Asian	1 25.0%	0 0%	3 75.0%	0 0%	0 0%	4 1.5%
American Indian	2 4.3%	1 2.2%	10 21.7%	15 32.6%	18 39.1%	46 17.5%
Other	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	3 100.0%	3 1.1%

A chi-square test for relationship between the ethnic background of the survey participants and the questions in the choice stage showed no significant difference at the .05 level with the exception of two questions. These questions were: # 40 – College cultural uniqueness (.00064) and # 45 – Faculty expertise (.03439).

The Spearman's rank correlation test was also used to describe the relationships between characteristics in stage three - choice. There were five questions that had values that were large and positive indicating linear association. These questions were: # 41 - Academic programs (.94346), # 47 – Advice of friends (.99006), # 48 – Employment opportunities after graduation

(.81257), # 52 – Advice of family members (.72061) and # 57 Campus advertising (.80352).

Sub-research question 3f.

By parental college experience, what are the major factors influencing students in the choice stage?

Table 22 below depicts the top five questions broken down by parental college experience in the choice stage. For clarification, yes indicates parental college experience, no indicates parents did not have college experience.

Table 22

Top five questions by parental college experience in the choice stage

Question # 39 - Campus location (n=266)	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
Yes	8	7	23	42	62	142
	5.6%	4.9%	16.2%	29.6%	43.7%	53.4%
No	3	7	16	29	69	124
	2.4%	5.6%	12.9%	23.4%	55.6%	46.6%
Question # 41 – Academic Programs (n=267)						
Yes	3	9	37	55	38	142
	2.1%	6.3%	26.1%	38.7%	26.8%	53.2%
No	5	4	32	36	48	125
	4.0%	3.2%	25.6%	28.8%	38.4%	46.8%
Question # 49 – Class size (n=267)						
Yes	7	11	36	46	42	142
	4.9%	7.7%	25.4%	32.4%	29.6 %	53.2%
No	4	9	25	38	49	125
	3.2%	7.2%	20.0%	30.4 %	39.2 %	46.8%

(Table continues)

Question # 53 - Cost (n=266)

	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
Yes	6 4.3%	11 7.8%	31 22.0%	38 27.0%	55 39.0%	141 53.0%
No	2 1.6%	7 5.6%	30 24.0%	32 25.6 %	54 43.2%	125 47.0%

Question # 58 – Hospitality/friendliness (n=267)

Yes	8 5.6%	5 3.5%	37 26.1%	51 35.9%	41 28.9%	142 53.2%
No	7 5.6%	8 6.4%	25 20.0%	45 36.0%	40 32.0%	125 46.8%

A chi-square test for relationship between parental college experience of the survey participants and the questions in the choice stage showed no significant difference at the .05 level with the exception of one question # 43 – Campus visit (.04071).

The Spearman's rank correlation test was used to describe the relationship between characteristics. Seven questions had values that were large and positive indicating an association between the characteristics. These questions were: # 36 – Academic quality (.73483), # 42 – College representatives (.86929), # 44 – Social activities (.83329), # 45 – Faculty expertise (.94390), # 47 – Advice of friends (.74790), # 52 – Advice of family members (.80298) and # 58 – Hospitality/friendliness (.64009).

Written comments

The survey included two subjective questions for the participants to add written responses. These comments are included in their entirety in Appendix G.

Summary

Chapter four presented the research results based on the survey "Factors Influencing Student College Choice" that was administered to the on-campus students at Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College. 270 students completed the survey representing 42% of the total on-campus student population. Chapter five will provide a summary of this project as well as conclusions and recommendations for further study.

Chapter Five

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

The final chapter of this study on factors influencing student college choice consists of a summary of the overall study, a review of the research findings, and conclusions and recommendations for practical application of the research and further study.

Summary

The problem this study addresses is that little is known about the factors that influence students to attend Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College. The purpose of this study is to identify factors that influence students to attend Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College. From this information, the institution could utilize these factors for the development of a strategic student recruitment plan as well as for market positioning and promotion.

Chapter 1 of this study discussed the importance of examining customer behavior as part of the business model of strategic market planning as applied to student recruitment. This project is significant because, like industry, understanding customer behavior is key to marketing efficiency and effectiveness. It is important to know and utilize these influences in the development of marketing strategy. Emerging from the literature was a three-stage model of college choice. The steps in this model are predisposition, search, and choice.

Three research questions were developed to guide the research in this study. They are:

1. What influences a student to choose to attend a post-secondary institution? (Stage one – predisposition.)
2. What information influences a student to consider Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College? (Stage two – search.)
3. What are the major influences that students consider when choosing to attend Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College? (Stage three – choice.)

In addition, eighteen sub-research questions were developed based on specific demographic variables.

Chapter 2 of this study reviewed the literature related to this topic. The existing literature on the subject of student recruitment is vast, however, there is very limited literature regarding student college choice in the tribal college category. Literature that was reviewed for this study included the historical background of college choice as well as the importance and practical use of understanding the college choice process. Chapter 2 focuses on a three-stage process of college choice: predisposition, search, and choice. Within each stage are factors that are typically important in the college choice process. Major authors in this area of interest include Hossler, Sevier, Kotler & Fox and Braxton.

Chapter 3 outlined the research methodology used in this study. Due to the limited existing literature in the subject area regarding college choice in the tribal college category, a descriptive survey research design was chosen. A written survey was developed, tested, and administered in January 2000 to the on-campus students at Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College. Forty-two percent (42%) of the total on-campus student population participated in this study. Chapter three discusses the research design, the study institution, population and sampling procedures, instrumentation, data collection procedures and data analysis.

Chapter 4 explains the findings of the study and discusses the results of the data analysis as they relate to the three research questions and the eighteen sub-questions. The results were analyzed for their relationship to the constructs of the three-stage college choice process. These results were organized and presented by research question and sub-question.

Summary of findings

Research question 1

What influences a student to choose to attend a post-secondary institution? (Stage one – predisposition.)

Analysis of the survey data showed that students at Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College agreed that they had always known they would attend college and that they possessed the academic capability of attending college, thus supporting the existing literature. Galotti & Kotzberg (1996) suggest that choosing to attend college may serve as an indirect measure of methods to achieve desired goals such as career opportunities, admission to graduate or professional school, intellectual development, and social status. Clinton (1989) also suggests that a person's perceptions and attitudes are reliable indicators of their intent and behavior. The high rating of these factors suggest that students possess internal aspirations for further education not influenced by outside factors. These results support the theories of Hossler (1984), Paulsen (1990b) and Stage & Rushin (1993). These very individual internal preferences and attitudes are consistently influential factors in the college choice process thus supporting Jackson's (1986) theory that a strong desire to attend a post-secondary institution was the single most important factor correlated to college enrollment.

The data analysis also showed that students were influenced by people – family members, friends and people other than family members, as well as the knowledge of friends attending college in the predisposition stage. These results support the earlier theories of Hossler (1984), Stage & Rushin (1993), Weiler (1994), Murphy (1991), and Schwartz (1995) that showed encouragement by individuals was influential in a student's predisposition to attend college. In particular, this study supported Hossler's (1984) and Weiler's (1994) theories that parents possess the greatest influence in a student's decision to attend college.

Comments received in the open-ended questions in the survey support the selection of these factors. A sample of these responses adding dimension to these results include "I did this for me," "My desire to go to college…were deciding factors for me," "A friend encouraged me to attend" and "Some of my relatives strongly suggested that I attend this college." (A complete transcription of the survey comments is located in Appendix G of this paper.)

Sub-research question 1a

By gender, what are the major factors influencing students in the predisposition stage?

Survey results showed again that most students have always known that they would attend college and that they felt they were capable of college level work. The results also showed, to a lesser extent, that family members and people other than family members influence a student's decision to attend college. In addition, the knowledge of available financial aid had some influence on a student's predisposition to attending college. Hossler & Gallagher (1987) stated that early information on financial aid, as well as institutional costs, are important stimulators in predisposition to college attendance. The results of this study support this theory.

Sub-research question 1b

By age, what are the major factors influencing students in the predisposition stage?

Results of the research illustrate that, again, students continue to acknowledge that they have always known they would attend college and that they were academically capable of completing college-level work. Students were also influenced by family members and people other than family members in their predisposition to college choice. Other factors that were significant in this area include the influence of high school curriculum and the influence of friends. Both Heath (1993) and Hossler's (1984) theories suggesting that students in a college preparatory curriculum are more likely to enroll in college are supported by this study finding.

Sub-research question 1c

By distance from hometown, what are the major factors influencing students in the predisposition stage?

Student survey response continued the theme of awareness of academic capability as well as the knowledge that they would attend college. Students were also influenced by people other than family members and the fact that most of their friends were attending college. The peer effect that affects a student's predisposition to attend college was noted in the literature by Kohn, Manski & Mundel (1976) and Manski & Wise (1983). Additionally, Jackson's (1988) study determined that having college-bound friends was very important in the college search stage.

Sub-research question 1d

By number of college credits completed, what are the major factors influencing students in the predisposition stage?

Once again, students were aware of their aspirations of attending college and their belief that they are academically capable of college-level work. Family members also influenced students.

Sub-research question 1e

By ethnic background, what are the major factors influencing students in the predisposition stage?

In the six ethnic background categories, students agreed that they always knew they would attend college and that they knew they were academically capable of completing college-level work. Again, students of all ethnic backgrounds were influenced by family members and other individuals close to them.

Sub-research question 1f

By parental college experience, what are the major factors influencing students in the predisposition stage?

Again, the research results showed that students always knew that they would attend college, that they were academically capable of completing college-level work, and that family members were influential in their predisposition to college choice. Additional factors that influenced students in this area were their involvement in high school activities. Boris and Rushin (1993) found in a study of prospective college students that high school activities were a positive predictor of a student's predisposition to attend college. Hossler & Gallagher (1987) and Manski & Wise (1983) found similar results in their studies. All are supported by the results of this study.

Research question 2

What information influences a student to consider Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College? (Stage two – search.)

Analysis of the research data showed that two factors, campus location and cost, were highly ranked by the students in the study regarding their college search. Other significant factors that students considered during their college search stage included campus atmosphere, hospitality/friendliness, academic programs and class size. The identification and emergence of these preferences by the students are a key part of the college search stage (Hossler & Gallagher, 1987).

The literature consistently revealed that the location of a campus can be a major factor in a potential student's decision to apply and enroll (Sevier, 1996). In addition, Absher & Crawford (1996) and Sevier (1994) stated that students may be looking for a college for convenience and accessibility as well as because they simply liked the location (Choy, Ottinger & Carroll, 1998). All of these theories are supported by the results of this study.

Cost of a college was a major influential factor to students in this study. Again, these results support the literature of Choy, Ottinger & Carroll (1998), Sevier (1994), and Weiler (1996) who stated that cost is a major influence for students. Cost helps define the group of institutions students consider as options for their future education.

King, Kobayashi & Bigler (1986) stated that the campus atmosphere was an important factor in the search and choice process. Similar findings were noted in the research of Absher & Crawford (1996) and Galotti & Mark (1994). All theories are supported by the results of this study.

Students are interested in the social environment of a campus and want to feel accepted and a part of a school. Students want to be proud of their school and want to be able to access other students and faculty to get their questions answered (Absher & Crawford, 1996; Hube, 1997; Sevier & Kappler, 1996; Sevier, 1998). In Henley & Roger's (1997) study, the friendliness of a college campus was an impressive factor for potential students. The importance of hospitality and friendliness was strongly supported in this study, as noted by the above literature.

Students in this study rated academic programs as a key factor in their college search stage. These results support the work of Sevier (1994) and Erdmann (1983). Erdmann found that the availability of specific academic programs was the single most important factor in the college selection process. Litten (1982) had similar findings stating that academic programs were a significant influence to prospective students.

In earlier studies (Straus & Van De Water, 1997), students ranked class size as one of the top ten influential factors in a student's search and choice process. While students in this study prefer the small class size and individual attention supporting this theory, in general, students will tend to consider and select a college they are comfortable with for their future education.

Again, many comments received in the open-ended section of the survey support these key factors influencing students in the search stage. A selection of these comments follows: "The place is like no other. There is an aura around the entire area," "I felt welcomed when I came to ask for information. Everyone was friendly to me – holding doors, saying 'Good Morning', smiling. Then I learned the class sizes were small," and "Location, location, location." (A full transcription of the survey comments is located in Appendix G.)

Sub-research question 2a

By gender, what are the major factors influencing students in the search stage?

The research results showed that students in the college search stage were influenced by campus location, academic programs, hospitality/friendliness, class size, and cost. Other factors that were significant by gender in the search stage included college reputation, campus atmosphere, college cultural uniqueness, campus safety, educational facilities, and college advertising.

While the influential factors of campus location, academic programs, hospitality/friendliness, class size, cost, and campus atmosphere in this study have been shown to support the literature earlier in this chapter, the additional factors of college reputation, cultural uniqueness, campus safety, educational facilities and college advertising are also supported by the existing literature. College reputation has a tremendous effect on college choice. Students value the reputation of a college and it rates highly as an influential factor by students in the college search and choice process (Adebayo, 1995; Maguire, 1981; McDonough & Antonio, 1996; Murphy, 1981; Sevier, 1992; Sevier, 1996; Straus & Van De Water, 1997). College cultural uniqueness continue to be a vital influence for some students. Many students are influenced by a college's commitment to cultural values and this reputation alone may be a significant factor in decision making (Hill, 1995; McDonough & Antonio, 1996; St. Cyr, 1994; Stock & Schmid, 1980).

Most recently, campus safety has emerged as an influential factor in a student's college choice process (Absher & Crawford, 1996; Sevier & Kappler, 1996; Sevier, 1998). The results of this study also support these earlier findings. Educational facilities such as classrooms, laboratories, and libraries are important in a student's selection of a college (Absher & Crawford, 1996; Straus & Van De Water, 1997; Sevier, 1998). They were also important in this study.

Finally, college advertising influences students in the college choice process. Many mediums have been shown to be effective at building college awareness, image, and visibility (Schultz, 1997; Hossler, Bean & Associates, 1990). Again, the results of this study support these theories.

Sub-research question 2b

By age, what are the major factors influencing students in the search stage?

Students participating in the study again rated campus atmosphere, campus location, academic programs, hospitality, class size, and cost as influential factors during their college search stage. Additional factors that were noted as important by the students in this stage include advice of family members and advice of friends.

Sub-research question 2c

By distance from hometown, what are the major factors influencing students in the search stage?

The research results illustrate that students in the search stage are influenced by the following factors: campus location, academic programs, hospitality/friendliness, class size, and cost.

Sub-research question 2d

By number of college credits completed, what are the major factors influencing students in the search stage?

Respondents indicated that they were influenced by campus atmosphere, campus location, academic programs, hospitality/friendliness, class size, and cost.

Sub-research question 2e

By ethnic background, what are the major factors influencing students in the search stage?

Analysis of the research data shows that students in the college search stage continue to be influenced by campus location, hospitality/friendliness, campus size, class size, and cost. Participants were also influenced to a lesser extent by college cultural uniqueness and college web sites in this stage. College web sites are important sources of information for prospective students (Sevier 1997b). This study supports Sevier's theory regarding the influence of the Internet and college web sites.

Sub-research question 2f

By parental college experience, what are the major factors influencing students in the search stage?

Research results show that students in the college search stage are influenced by campus location, academic programs, hospitality/friendliness, class size, and cost. They are also influenced, to some extent, by employment opportunities after graduation and advice of friends. Students are often attracted to post-secondary education because of the career opportunities it may provide (Adebayo, 1995; Gray, 1996; National Assessment of Vocational Education, 1994; Sevier, 1998). In addition, Paulsen (1990a) and Perry (1995) theorize that students consider job placement as part of their search and choice process. This study found similar results to the existing research.

Research question 3

What are the major influences that students consider when choosing to attend Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College?

Analysis of the research data shows that campus location had the greatest level of agreement by the research respondents as influential during their college choice process. Additional factors that were important, once again, included the factors of academic programs, class size, cost, and hospitality/friendliness. Galotti and Mark (1994) conclude that desirable college characteristics are most often included as part of a student's choice set. These characteristics may be ranked by students and the successful matching of factors this choice set determines the resulting college selection.

The comments received in the open-ended questions in the survey instrument support these the emergence of these influential factors. A sample of these comments are: "I attended because of the location and programs offered," "Fond du Lac is very convenient and offers classes of interest. It has a friendly atmosphere," and "Overall, the friendliness of the staff here and the low cost of school and financial aid I receive made me choose Fond du Lac." (Appendix G contains a complete transcription of the survey comments.)

Sub-research question 3a

By gender, what are the major factors influencing students in the choice stage?

Data derived from the research analysis demonstrate that campus location, academic programs, class size, cost, and hospitality/friendliness were the main influential factors as students selected to enroll at Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College. There are several additional factors that were important to students, by gender, in the choice stage. They include campus atmosphere, academic quality, campus safety, college reputation, college cultural uniqueness, campus visit, and availability of financial aid.

Earlier studies by Henley & Rogers (1997), Hossler, Bean & Associates (1990), King, Kobayashi & Bigler (1986), Rubins (1985), Ralph & Vancko (1997) and Sevier (1992) found that a campus visit was a major factor in the college decision-making process. While not one of the top factors influencing students in this study, the campus visit was rated as an important influence, thus supporting the existing literature. The positive campus visit would seem to be an important factor related to hospitality/friendliness in the college choice process. In addition, the availability of financial aid was an important factor influencing students in the choice stage of this study. This finding supports the research of Lauer (1998) and Spiegler (1998).

Sub-research question 3b

By age, what are the major factors influencing students in the choice stage?

Analysis of the survey data showed that respondents were influenced by campus location, class size, cost, campus size, and hospitality/friendliness. Students were also influenced by academic programs, social activities, and college web site in the college choice process. Dortch (1997), Weiler (1996) and Litten (1982) all found that social activities are useful in influencing students in the college choice process. This factor was also important to students participating in this study.

Sub-research question 3c

By distance from hometown, what are the major factors influencing students in the choice stage?

Campus location, academic programs, class size, cost, and hospitality/friendliness were again rated the most influential factors by data analyzed in the research.

Sub-research question 3d

By college credits completed, what are the major factors influencing students in the choice stage?

Analysis of the research data shows that campus location, academic programs, class size, cost, and hospitality/friendliness are the main influential factors to students in the choice stage. Additional influential factors emerged in the data analysis. They include: academic quality, campus safety, college cultural awareness, college representatives, campus visit, faculty expertise, advice from family members and teachers or guidance counselors, and college-published materials.

Again, the major factors influencing students continue to remain the same. However, several additional factors of lesser influence were also noted in this study. Those not discussed earlier in this chapter include college representatives, faculty expertise, and college-published materials. Visits by college representatives were rated as an extremely effective influence for prospective students (Maguire, 1981; Rowe 1980). College representatives were also an influential factor in the choice stage in this study. King, Kobayashi & Bigler (1986) suggest that faculty members make strong impressions on prospective students and this is a positive factor in a student's college selection. Faculty expertise was also an important factor to students participating in this study. Finally, college-published materials emerged as an influential factor as a result of this study. This finding supports the theories of Maguire (1981), Sevier (1997b). Perry (1995) and Galotti & Mark (1994).

Sub-research question 3e

By ethnic background, what are the major factors influencing students in the choice stage?

Data analysis shows that the major influential factors by respondent ethnic background in the college choice stage are campus location, academic programs, class size, cost, and hospitality/friendliness. Other influential factors that were important to survey participants in this area were college cultural uniqueness and faculty expertise.

Sub-research question 3f

By parental college experience, what are the major factors influencing students in the choice stage?

Analysis of the research data showed that there were five major influential factors to the respondents in the choice stage. These factors, once again, are campus location, academic programs, class size, cost, and hospitality/friendliness. A college campus visit was also rated as influential to students in the choice stage.

Conclusions

A number of important conclusions regarding the college choice process at Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College can be derived from the research findings of this study. These conclusions will be discussed as they relate to the three main study constructs.

Stage one - predisposition

Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College students who participated in this study appear to have a high level of internal motivation and aspiration to attend college. The College appears to attract a significant number of students who believe they are destined to attend college. In turn, these students also have a strong belief in their ability to complete college level work. Students in this college choice stage are also influenced by people such as family members and other individuals the students know and respect. It was interesting to note the consistency of answers in this section. Each demographic grouping continually agreed with the statements dealing with intrinsic knowledge of their college attendance and academic ability as well as the influence of people who are close to them.

Stage two – search

Consistently, the research data shows that students at Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College deemed several factors as influential in their college search process. These factors included campus location, academic programs, hospitality/friendliness, class size, cost, campus size, and campus atmosphere. The agreement of these factors across all demographic variables was remarkable. It is interesting to note that these basic college characteristics were found as the most influential by students when compared with the more visible types of influences such as college advertising, campus representatives or even financial aid availability.

Stage three – choice

Again, the data analysis of the research shows that students choose to attend Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College because of several factors. These factors are identical to the characteristics identified in the search stage and were consistently highly rated by the survey participants. These factors include: campus location, academic programs, class size, cost, hospitality/friendliness, and campus size. These findings support the importance of these characteristics throughout the college choice process. Once again, it is important to note the consistency of these responses and their similarity to those in the search stage.

Practical application of this research

It is clear that there are several factors that are important to students who consider and ultimately choose to enroll at Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College. Staff members at the College may wish to consider the following practical applications of this research.

As part of a strategic marketing and recruitment plan, this data should be included in the customer analysis section. From this information, positioning and specific marketing tactics can be developed to focus on these apparently important aspects in the college selection process. For example, marketing efforts may target and promote the convenience and attractiveness of the campus location. These marketing action plans might also support the conducive class size and the hospitality and friendliness of the current students, faculty, and staff. Emphasis might also be placed on the availability of and rigor of academic programs. Finally, the cost of attendance should be promoted to prospective students.

Staff members at Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College may wish to take the information included in this study and enhance and/or expand on it. As an example, the existing survey could be used on a regular basis to follow trends regarding the factors students consider when selecting a college to attend. This study could be used as a baseline for further research and comparison.

The survey instrument used in this research performed well. It was easy to understand and to complete by the participants. It can quickly be adapted by considering the appropriate demographic characteristics and modifying this section of the survey as appropriate.

Finally, this study can be used to add to the existing literature for use by other tribal colleges. These colleges may be interested in learning more about their students and the factors influencing their enrollment at their colleges to create more effective and efficient market practices.

Recommendations for further study

The goal of this research study was to identify factors that influence student college choice at a northeastern Minnesota tribal college. The author has several recommendations for more research in this area.

First, additional information may be gained from further analysis of the research data. For example, more detailed breakdowns of the responses by specific demographic characteristics could result in very targeted marketing practices much like those used in private industry today.

As marketing technology becomes more advanced, colleges may want to consider using data mining techniques to assist with the discovery of specific and unique student characteristics. Data mining uses technology to make advantageous use of large stores of data. Data mining uses many different methods to process and interpret this data to make it meaningful in market planning (Cios, Pedrycz & Swiniarski, 1998; Liu, 1998). Another useful marketing technique that may be helpful to colleges is integrating mapping software into the marketing plan. This type of software can analyze markets through demographic analysis, site selection, competitive analysis, and other factors providing a valuable tool to college marketing staff members (Business Map Pro User's Guide, 1996).

It may be useful for colleges to administer and analyze customer response on a regular basis. Annual or even semi-annual gathering of student information on college choice could provide useful data for trend analysis. Identification of trends can assist with the most appropriate and timely methods for reaching the target student audiences. This practice would result in more efficient and effective student recruitment.

The addition of other market research techniques such as focus groups of students may support and enhance the data results. For example, several focus groups of new students may give additional meaning that supports and enhances the quantitative data.

Business and industry spend a great deal of time and effort trying to understand its customers. Colleges and universities need to do the same to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of their marketing practices. Understanding these influential factors in the college choice process are key to achieving marketing success.

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Appendix A

Institutional Approval for Research Project

Fond du Lac Tribal & Community College
2101 14th Street • Cloquet, Minnesota 55720
218-879-0800 • 1-800-657-3712 • TTY 218-879-0805
Fax 218-879-0814 • http://www.fdl.cc.mn.us

Office of the President

August 2, 1999

Becky Urbanski-Junkert
4184 Ridge Circle
Hermantown, MN 55811

Dear Becky:

I am familiar with the Educational Policy and Administration doctoral program through the Leadership Academy at the University of Minnesota. Your field project dealing with why students choose the post-secondary institution that they ultimately attend would be very beneficial to Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College (FDLTCC) and other postsecondary schools as well.

We accept your request to partner with FDLTCC, and our admissions, assessment, and recruitment staff will work with you on this important project. Please contact Larry Anderson when you are prepared to begin your project. Also, please contact Judy Shultz, our Institutional Researcher and Assessment Chairperson as you begin survey development. Her direct telephone number is 879-0834.

Please provide the campus with the appropriate human subjects documentation request.

We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Jack

Lester Jack Briggs, President
Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College

pc: Larry Anderson, Vice President of Administration and Student Services
Judy Shultz
File

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Appendix B

Factors Influencing Student College Choice Survey

Factors influencing student college choice at Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College (Survey consent information)

Please read the following statements to students participating in the study.

You are invited to be in a research study regarding factors influencing student college choice at Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College. Students from the college have been asked to participate in this project. We ask that you listen carefully to the information regarding this study and ask any questions you may have before completing the survey.

The purpose of this study is to determine the factors influencing student college choice at Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College.

If you agree to participate in this study, we ask that you complete the survey to be distributed. It will take approximately ten (10) minutes to complete. When you have completed the survey, please return it to the person who distributed the survey.

There are no risks involved in participating in this study. The benefits to participating in this study will assist with more efficient and effective student recruitment efforts.

The records of this study will be kept private. In any type of report we might publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be kept in a locked file, only researchers will have access to the records.

Your decision to participate or not participate in this research study will not affect your current or future relationships with Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without affecting this relationship.

The researcher conducting this study is Becky Urbanski. Please contact her at 786-2377 if you have any questions. You may also contact her advisor, Dr. Tom Peacock at 726-6898. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, contact Research Subjects Advocate line, D528 Mayo, 420 Delaware Street S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55455; telephone 612-625-1650.

Thank you for your assistance with this project.

© 1999 Rebecca A. Urbanski

STUDENT SURVEY

Factors Influencing Student College Choice

The purpose of this research study is to gather information as part of a doctoral dissertation about factors influencing student college choice. Your cooperation in completing this survey is greatly appreciated. It will take approximately ten (10) minutes to complete this form. When you are finished with the survey, please return it to the person who asked you to complete it.

There are no risks involved in the completion of this survey. The results will be used to assist with creating more effective student recruitment programs. The information on this completed form will be kept confidential with the researcher only having access to the records. Your participation in the survey is voluntary.

The researcher conducting this study is Becky Urbanski. If you have any questions, you may contact her at 786-2377. You may also contact her faculty advisor for this study, Dr. Tom Peacock, 726-6898. Thank you for your assistance with this project.

Demographic Information

Gender: Male______ Age:______
Female_____

Distance from hometown to campus: 0-30 miles______ 31 or more miles______

Number of college credits completed: 0-24________ 25 or more________

Ethnic Background: Caucasian_____ African American_____ Hispanic______

Asian______ American Indian____ Other (please list)___________

One or more of my parents have attended college: Yes_____ No______

For each of the following statements, please circle the number that best describes your point of view.

1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=neutral 4=agree 5=strongly agree

1. I always knew I would attend college. 1 2 3 4 5

2. I have always thought that I am academically capable of attending college. 1 2 3 4 5

3. Living close to a higher education institution influenced my decision to attend college. 1 2 3 4 5

4. The curriculum in my high school influenced my decision to attend college. 1 2 3 4 5

5. My involvement in high school activities influenced my decision to attend college. 1 2 3 4 5

6. Knowledge of available financial aid influenced my decision to attend college. 1 2 3 4 5

7. Most of my friends are attending college. 1 2 3 4 5

8. My family influenced my decision to attend college. 1 2 3 4 5

9. People other than my family influenced my decision to attend college. 1 2 3 4 5

10. My friends influenced my decision to attend college. 1 2 3 4 5

I was influenced by the following factors as I considered colleges to attend:

1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=neutral 4=agree 5=strongly agree

11. College reputation 1 2 3 4 5
12. College academic quality 1 2 3 4 5
13. Faculty expertise 1 2 3 4 5
14. Campus atmosphere 1 2 3 4 5
15. Campus location 1 2 3 4 5
16. College cultural uniqueness 1 2 3 4 5
17. Academic programs 1 2 3 4 [illegible]
18. Hospitality/friendliness 1 2 3 4 5
19. Social activities 1 2 3 4 5
20. Campus safety 1 2 3 4 5
21. Campus size 1 2 3 4 5
22. Educational facilities 1 2 3 4 5
23. Employment opportunities after graduation 1 2 3 4 5
24. Class size 1 2 3 4 5
25. Cost 1 2 3 4 5

26. Availability of financial aid	1 2 3 4 5
27. Advice of family members	1 2 3 4 5
28. Advice of friends	1 2 3 4 5
29. Advice of teachers or guidance counselors	1 2 3 4 5
30. College published materials	1 2 3 4 5
31. College Web site	1 2 3 4 5
32. College advertising (i.e. television, newspaper, radio)	1 2 3 4 5
33. College representatives	1 2 3 4 5
34. Campus visit	1 2 3 4 5

The following factors influenced my decision to attend Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College:

1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=neutral 4=agree 5=strongly agree

35. Campus atmosphere	1 2 3 4 5
36. College academic quality	1 2 3 4 5
37. Campus safety	1 2 3 4 5
38. College reputation	1 2 3 4 5
39. Campus location	1 2 3 4 5
40. College cultural uniqueness	1 2 3 4 5
41. Academic programs	1 2 3 4 5
42. College representatives	1 2 3 4 5
43. Campus visit	1 2 3 4 5
44. Social activities	1 2 3 4 5
45. Faculty expertise	1 2 3 4 5
46. College Web site	1 2 3 4 5
47. Advice of friends	1 2 3 4 5
48. Employment opportunities after graduation	1 2 3 4 5
49. Class size	1 2 3 4 5
50. Educational facilities	1 2 3 4 5
51. Availability of financial aid	1 2 3 4 5
52. Advice of family members	1 2 3 4 5
53. Cost	1 2 3 4 5
54. Advice of teachers or guidance counselors	1 2 3 4 5
55. College published materials	1 2 3 4 5
56. Campus size	1 2 3 4 5
57. College advertising (i.e. television, newspaper, radio)	1 2 3 4 5
58. Hospitality/friendliness	1 2 3 4 5

Were there any other factors that influenced your decision to attend Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College?

Other comments:

PLEASE RETURN YOUR COMPLETED SURVEY TO THE PERSON WHO GAVE IT TO YOU. THANK YOU !

© 1999 Rebecca A. Urbanski

Appendix C

Letter and Validation Form

Becky Urbanski

4184 Ridge Circle, Hermantown, MN 55811

December 7, 1999

Gary McVey
Minnesota Private College Council
Galtier Plaza
175 Fifth St. E, Ste. 401
St. Paul, MN 55105-2903

Dear Gary:

Thank you very much for agreeing to review the survey for my doctoral research project as an expert in the area of student college choice. I appreciate your time to assist me with this project.

The topic of my doctoral dissertation deals with factors influencing student college choice at a northeastern Minnesota tribal college. The survey will be administered to students at Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College in early 2000.

I am enclosing a draft copy of my survey instrument. Please take some time to review the survey and complete the validation form. Please return the validation form and survey to me in the enclosed stamped, self-addressed envelope by December 17, 1999. If you have any questions, please contact me at 218-786-2377 or by e-mail: burbanski@bhshealth.org.

Thank you in advance for your assistance. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Becky Urbanski

Encl.

SURVEY VALIDATION FORM

Factors Influencing Student College Choice

Please circle Y for yes, N for no

Part I – Predisposition	Question Appropriate to Subject?	Delete?	Reword to:
1. I always knew I would attend college.	Y/N	Y/N	
2. I have always known that I am academically capable of attending college.	Y/N	Y/N	
3. Living close to a higher education institution influenced my decision to attend college.	Y/N	Y/N	
4. The curriculum in my high school influenced my decision to attend college.	Y/N	Y/N	
5. My involvement in high school activities influenced my decision to attend college.	Y/N	Y/N	
6. Knowledge of available financial aid influenced my decision to attend college.	Y/N	Y/N	
7. Most of my friends are attending college.	Y/N	Y/N	
8. My family influenced my decision to attend college.	Y/N	Y/N	
9. People other than my family influenced my decision to attend college.	Y/N	Y/N	
10. My friends influenced my decision to attend college.	Y/N	Y/N	

Part II – Search	Factor Appropriate to Subject?	Delete?	Reword to:
11. College reputation	Y/N	Y/N	
12. College academic quality	Y/N	Y/N	
13. Faculty expertise	Y/N	Y/N	
14. Campus atmosphere	Y/N	Y/N	
15. Campus location	Y/N	Y/N	
16. College cultural uniqueness	Y/N	Y/N	
17. Academic programs	Y/N	Y/N	
18. Hospitality/friendliness	Y/N	Y/N	
19. Social activities	Y/N	Y/N	
20. Campus safety	Y/N	Y/N	
21. Campus size	Y/N	Y/N	
22. Educational facilities	Y/N	Y/N	
23. Graduate success (job placement)	Y/N	Y/N	
24. Class size	Y/N	Y/N	
25. Cost	Y/N	Y/N	
26. Financial aid availability	Y/N	Y/N	
27. Advice of family members	Y/N	Y/N	
28. Advice of friends	Y/N	Y/N	
29. Advice of teachers	Y/N	Y/N	
30. College published materials	Y/N	Y/N	
31. College Web site	Y/N	Y/N	
32. College advertising (i.e. television, newspaper, radio)	Y/N	Y/N	
33. College representatives	Y/N	Y/N	
Part III - Choice			
34. College reputation	Y/N	Y/N	
35. College academic quality	Y/N	Y/N	
36. Faculty expertise	Y/N	Y/N	
37. Campus atmosphere			
38. Campus location	Y/N	Y/N	

39. College cultural uniqueness	Y/N	Y/N
40. Academic programs	Y/N	Y/N
41. Hospitality/friendliness	Y/N	Y/N
42. Social activities	Y/N	Y/N
43. Campus safety	Y/N	Y/N
44. Campus size	Y/N	Y/N
45. Educational facilities	Y/N	Y/N
46. Graduate success (job placement)	Y/N	Y/N
47. Class size	Y/N	Y/N
48. Cost	Y/N	Y/N
49. Financial aid availability	Y/N	Y/N
50. Advice of family members	Y/N	Y/N
51. Advice of friends	Y/N	Y/N
52. Advice of teachers	Y/N	Y/N
53. College published materials	Y/N	Y/N
54. College Web site	Y/N	Y/N
55. College advertising (i.e. television, newspaper, radio)	Y/N	Y/N
56. College representatives	Y/N	Y/N

**Is this question appropriate to the subject? Y/N Delete? Y/N Reword to:

Were there any other factors that influenced your decision to attend Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College?

REVIEWER NAME__________________________________ **DATE**__________________

TITLE____

Thank you for your assistance! Please return in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope by Dec. 17, 1999.

Appendix D

Enrollment Management Experts

Enrollment Management Experts

Sally Daniels
Director of Undergraduate Admission
Augsburg College
2211 Riverside Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55454

Mary Docken
College Counselor
Mounds Park Academy
2051 E. Larpenteur Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55109

Marla Friederichs
Associate Vice President for Enrollment
University of St. Thomas
2115 Summit Avenue, Mail 32F-1
St. Paul, MN 55105-1096

Gary McVey
Associate Vice President for Marketing and Communication
Minnesota Private Colleges
Galtier Plaza
175 5th Street E. Ste. 401
St. Paul, MN 55101-2903

Ollie Meyer
Associate Director of Admissions
The College of St. Scholastica
1200 Kenwood Avenue
Duluth, MN 55811

Gary Neumann
Executive Director of Enrollment Management
Michigan Technological University
1400 Townsend Drive
Houghton, MI 49931

Clarence Sharpe
Assistant Director, Transfer Admissions
The College of St. Scholastica
1200 Kenwood Avenue
Duluth, MN 55811

Tim Utter
Director of Admission
Concordia University of St. Paul
275 N. Syndicate
St. Paul, MN 55104

Appendix E

Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College Survey Review Committee

Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College Survey Review Committee

Larry Anderson
Vice President of Administration and Student Services

Lester Jack Briggs
President

Wade Gordon
Affirmative Action Officer

Judy Shultz
Institutional Researcher

Tom Urbanski
Director of Public Information and Admissions

Appendix F

Institutional Review Board Human Subjects Committee Approval

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Twin Cities Campus

Research Subjects' Protection Programms
Institutional Review Board: Human Subjects Committee (IRB)
Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)

Box 820
D528 Mayo Memorial Building
420 Delaware Street S.E.
Minneapolis, MN 55455-0392

612-626-5654
Fax: 612-626-6061
irb@umn.edu
iacuc@umn.edu
http://www.research.umn.edu/subjects.htm

December 28, 1999

Rebecca A. Urbanski
4184 Ridge Circle
Hermantown MN 55811

RE: "Factors influencing student college choice at a northeastern Minnesota tribal college."

Human Subjects Code Number: **9912E28401**

Dear Ms. Urbanski:

The IRB: Human Subjects Committee determined that the referenced study is exempt from review under federal guidelines 45 CFR Part 46.101(b) category #2 SURVEYS/INTERVIEWS; STANDARDIZED EDUCATIONAL TESTS; OBSERVATION OF PUBLIC BEHAVIOR.

The code number above is assigned to your research. That number and the title of your study must be used in all communication with the IRB office.

Upon receipt of this letter, you may begin your research. If you have questions, please call the IRB office at (612) 626-5654.

The IRB wishes you success with this research.

Sincerely,

Carol Siegel

Carol Siegel
Assistant Director

CS/to

CC: Thomas Peacock

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Appendix G

Survey Comments

Were there any other factors that influenced your decision to attend Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College?

Mostly because of the classes available, the sizes of each class. Lower costs were a big factor and close to home.

It's a unique college with its Native American courses. The class sizes are small which makes one on one with the instructor possible.

The place is like no other. There is an aura around the entire area.

My mother went here and she loved it.

Talking with Carol Bonde about the possibility of going to college to better myself. This school had what I wanted to go to school for and was close to my home.

I felt welcomed when I came to ask for information. Everyone was friendly to me – holding doors, saying "Good Morning, " smiling. I felt great. Then I learned the class sizes were small.

Some of my relatives strongly suggested that I attend this college.

I like the teacher's commitment to the students. The teachers really make the difference and so does Jack Briggs. Not often does the school president address you by name.

It was close to home and the credits transfer easily to a university.

Yes, the college has a great multicultural atmosphere.

When I came to inquire about attending, the people who helped me knew exactly what needed to be done to get me in and they were so friendly.

Work study opportunities.

I live only about five minutes from the college.

Awesome law enforcement program.

The wemon niij!

Only college around with law enforcement in the area.

To be close to my children.

Transferable credits to four-year college.

Some of my friends come here.

The only factors were the size of the classes and the closeness of the campus.

Small classes – close to home – both were important to me.

I really enjoy the small class sizes.

Linda Shelton, Don Jarvinen and the promise of support.

The availability of tutors, especially for math and science.

The school is one of the few schools in the state that has the law enforcement program.

Law enforcement program.

It was close and a smaller campus.

I was sent the info I needed and wanted.

One main reason is for my son who recently started school so I want to show him school is better for a people. Getting as much education as you can.

I was a good opportunity for me.

Location, location, location.

It is the only college close enough to where I live.

Close to family.

Just that it was close to home and cheap.

Nothing better to do with time/life.

I would be able to finish school sooner.

I have a family member that basically dragged me here ☺

In my hometown, low cost, many friends attending. I liked the thought of attending small school at first.

The dorms because they're close to the school and they're nice to live in.

Yes, Bruce Carlson. Good guy.

Also was influenced by past alumni.

Very close to home and my job is in Cloquet.

In traveling distance to home.

I was unsure of my major, so I decided to go to FDLTCC because I could start on my generals while I made up my mind.

One instructor, Ron Gittings. Great instructor.

Wanted my degree in law enforcement but couldn't afford to go to Hibbing.

To get law enforcement degree.

Required for post.

Only law enforcement program in the area.

Has the law enforcement program – closest to Duluth.

Closer than Hibbing and St. Paul.

The only reason I came here was the law enforcement program.

It was the only college in the Twin Ports area that had law enforcement.

I have a B.A. and am attending this school for law enforcement. It is close.

Law enforcement. Academic community.

I needed some classes to complete my four-year degree at UMD in Criminal Justice.

Law enforcement.

Instructors that work in the field they're teaching.

Offering the classes that were needed.

It was the only place close enough to receive an associate in law enforcement without moving or traveling (commuting) far.

Was required to for post. Friendliness is extremely important upon first impressions.

Only school in the area that offered the remaining law enforcement requirements necessary after attending UMD.

The specific law enforcement program.

I attended because of the location and programs offered.

Job I want requires an AA and Fond du Lac had the course I needed.

The diverse atmosphere and cultural awareness.

I chose this college because I used to live three miles away and it is very affordable.

I did this for me – being able to go back to school was a big plus.

Location.

Close to home, small class size, know people.

Close by.

They offer great opportunities for students like myself and are very accepting of us.

My brother.

Good place to start back for in transferring situation. Like to see other cultures.

A friend I met after high school. Friend encouraged me to attend.

Fond du Lac is very convenient and offers classes of interest. It has a friendly atmosphere.

Its location.

Closeness to my children and business contacts – available opportunities – available housing. Need housing for non-traditional students.

Yes. Because if is a "tribal" and community college!!

Close by my home so it was convenient.

It was the closest to home for the program I was interested in.

I live only three blocks from Fond du Lac.

By one of the advisors.

The type of classes offered.

Financial.

Family and friends.

Brian Jon Maciewski.

Closest to my high school.

I live in Cloquet and the distance to travel was a determining factor.

Business cohort program made a lot of difference in my decision.

The small campus, the location, childcare facility and the staff had a great impact on me.

Personal injury. I could not work at the time school started, so I decided to go to school. It is something that I always wanted to do. So here I am.

I felt FDLTCC would be a great place to start my four-year college education.

The school's willingness to accept me along with some factors that presented a problem (at the time) with me getting back into school.

Both my mother and my sister attend or have attended and said it is a great school.

The reputation of their human service program.

Only law enforcement courses in the area.

My desire to go to college and the location and size of FDL was the deciding factors for me.

They had the program I wanted and no other school around here does.

My kids mostly. I lived on the reservation with their dad and I needed a good job to take care of my kids.

Being a non-traditional student, FDLCC fits my life and is the place I choose to get my higher ed.

My brother attended FDLTCC.

Housing facilities are a plus. I like the personal attention received when signing up for classes.

FDL is the only college within 50 miles of where I live.

Work comp very willing to pay for programs here compared to UMD and Scholastica.

To be honest, I seen [sic] the ad and called the school. Enrolled the day of classes.

Only college in area that offered law enforcement.

The pressure to continue going to school. Overall the friendliness of the staff here and the low cost of school and financial aid I receive made me choose Fond du Lac.

FDLTCC has the program that I wanted.

The cohort program.

The human services program with chemical dependency extension and beautiful building.

Advice from a teacher here that I am close to.

All my friends that go here told me about it and what made me make my decision was the dorms.

That the college had a range of ages. It helped widen my social circle. You should act very mature, you are not based in your peer group. You must show you are here to learn.

Was recommended by JTPA.

CD program available here.

I wanted to live outside Duluth. It's cheaper to live in Cloquet (rent-wise). I have a nice job at Black Bear as well.

I've attended here before. The fact that credits transfer and most of the staff is friendly.

I live with somebody that has been attending Fond du Lac and he was the biggest influence in my area.

The distance and traveling time from my home and work.

Working with DVR/DVS and disability counselor – availability of notetaker, testing in CAA.

Mostly location and cost.

Other comments:

I also had two older sisters who graduated from here and found themselves wonderful jobs.

I think the campus is cool.

The reason most of my friends don't attend college is they're (still) in high school.

I wish it were a four-year college.

I don't enjoy going here. I feel that most instructors are too dry and the classes are not interesting.

I've attended two colleges so far and this has been the best investment for myself.

This is an excellent school.

You need to accept Visa/MasterCard. Some students do not qualify for financial aid/scholarships, need to use credit card. I almost couldn't attend because you do not accept them.

I enjoy attending college. I have learned a lot about me and what I am capable of.

I have already ran into quite a few problems with this college already! This is only my second semester. I plan on transferring to a better facility.

This is my first semester here. I've heard a lot of positive comments and I have found them to be true. My experience here so far has been great. All staff members have been very helpful and friendly.

Know your role!

Financial aid director needs help.

I enjoy this school. It has given me a good base to start my college career with.

Faculty and staff seem to have too much power. They seem to be able to bump students from rooms for what they deem more important and cut in front of long lines and waited on first. There is also too little staff (example: financial aid) for student related services.

I wish this was a four-year college.

Personally, it could be presented more seriously by some instructors.
Skeptical at first about going here, however, have been very satisfied overall with quality of education.

I'm not getting any younger!

The financial aid advisor is not very helpful in every experience I've had with him. He treats people like they're stupid and should already know what they are doing.

There are a few – mainly one woman – in this college that is very unfriendly and rude. I wouldn't have ever attended had she been the person I first talked to – friendliness is very important.

I was advised by a former counselor to attend the human services program here.

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